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THOSE ABOUT TRENCH



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THOSE ABOUT TRENCH

BY

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New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1916

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**Set up and electrotyped. Published February, 1916. Reprinted
February, 1916.**

**Norwood Press:
Berwick & Smith Co., Norwood, Mass., U.S.A.**

To
GEORGE NOBLE CARMAN
AFTER TWENTY YEARS

THOSE ABOUT TRENCH

PROLOGUE

TRENCH had been fishing above Dixon's mill. Dixon was gone from that shadowy deep wild of granite and cedar, having left the key of his cabin for Trench. But, after all, this is not the way to begin. I tell a tale of the twenty-eighth of June. June — but the proper start is neither Dixon nor brides nor the odour of roses; the proper start is a leaf of history.

On June 28, 323 B.C., Alexander of Macedon died, having quieted all the world except Macedon, which is not quiet yet. On June 28, 1389 A.D., the Serbian nation was crushed by the Turks at Kosovo. On June 28, 1891, the alliance of Germany, Austria, and Italy was renewed. On June 28, 1908, the late Crown Prince Franz Ferdinand had completed his preparations for annexing Bosnia-Herzegovina to Austria-Hungary. On June 28, 1909, Austria was trying fifty-three Slavs for high treason. On June 28, 1910, the newly established Diet of Bosnia-Herzegovina decided that the proffered constitution did not suit the needs of the people, and adjourned for the annual day of Serbian sorrow.

It was on June 28, 1911, that Trench went fishing. On that day the German corvette *Panther* was setting out for Morocco to test the strength of the Triple Entente, and King George was opening the Royal Agricultural Show at Norwich. But on exactly that date, June 28, 1911, the ladyslippers burst into bloom, opening a still more royal show. This was on King

George's loyal island of St. Joseph, between Superior and Huron. Because Trench went fishing on that day, and because of the trivial dear event that he plucked a ladyslipper, this tale came to be written.

He had whipped the brown stream far into the cedar uplands. At six o'clock his creel was full of ferns and fish, and it was time to quit. He felt some regret at leaving so good a stream, and imagined the orange tails of the survivors all pointing downstream in the deep pools, waving an insolent farewell. But he corrected that idle fancy. Trout are not insolent, and trout do not wave farewell.

Being very hungry, he built a tiny fire, broiled a half-pounder, ate the crisp flesh, and tossed the lacy skeleton away. It fell on a flat rock, where it looked like a fossil. It was no different from the skeleton of its millionth ancestor. The generations of trout had pulsed along without progress or meaning.

As Trench started back towards Encampment, a white-throated sparrow was asking some sort of heavenly question from the top of a charred tree. He left a thin, sweet query in the air, as if he suspected that the universe is a great unfinished adventure. So it struck Trench at first, till he reflected that it was all a matter of the chemistry of light. The song was inevitably started by sunshine and inevitably stopped by darkness.

As he stopped to listen, turning a lean cheek away from the level sun, Trench presumed that the thoughts of any white-throated girl were as automatic as those of the white-throated sparrow. The young physician — he was a specialist in the diseases of children — was determined to be impersonal.

For he had lost his father and mother in 1907, by the sinking of a ship. The court of inquiry had not been able to fix the blame, and certainly the ocean was not to blame. Oxygen and hydrogen are what they

are, and not some other thing. They are quite impersonal, and Trench was subduing his bitter heart to the quality of these lords.

Naturally he had found it hard to think impersonally of his little mother. The last time he saw her was at Genoa, as she was about to go on board. She had stood on the pier with a scarf fluttering around her neck like a bluebird. She had put her arms around his neck, and told him how proud she was of him. He had kissed her good-bye, not knowing that the atoms of her lips would presently fade forever from that sweet pattern.

There was a vain search for the bodies, and then Trench went quietly back to Chicago. In the spring of 1909, when he was appointed instructor at Lister, he built in Halsted Street, like an immigrant making a new start. It was in Halsted property that the elder Trench had made his first money — a part of the quarter million which now fell to his son.

In unobserved ways Trench proceeded to return the income of that inheritance to the Halsted region. In so doing he was aware of no motive. He was neither bestowing charity nor returning property. When he put antitoxin where it could be had within five minutes by any physician in certain wards, his one concern was to keep the fact out of the newspapers.

Trench had chosen pediatrics deliberately, because children would let him alone. I do not know whether his brooding should be called abnormal or not. But it was as uncommon as the death of parents is common. And it is uncommon that any man, year after year, should keep a rose burning before his mother's picture in his bedroom.

As for marriage, the thought of it had dropped from him automatically. He was straight and alert and masculine, but the faces of dead mothers and dead children filled his brain. He was nine and twenty, and

scornfully clean. Immigrants poured into Halsted Street and bred there, and Trench worked hard to save the creatures bred. But he felt no desire to continue his own line. He saw too many children dying — as in the streets of a pillaged town.

Dusk gathered as he strode along, and a cricket chirped. He recollected that the female cricket eats a part of her mate after pairing. The phenomenon had its parallels in human life, but he must regard it impersonally.

The wood road dipped downward, and by the edge he noted a gleam of colour. He knew it for an orchid, a specimen of the showy ladyslipper. He cut the long stalk of springing leaves and looked at the great blossom. It seemed a bit of afterglow caught in the woodland. Yet how firmly it swung out, cunningly backed by four white wings, like bridal ribbons flaring. Some woman must have made the exquisite thing.

On second thought it was not exquisite. It was a mechanism of six parts. He saw the upper stamen — tongue-like, but not a tongue. He saw the pollen masses, and remembered how the first bee would lighten them and make them change position, so as to admit the second bee to the stigma. It was all automatic, and should remind him of nothing purposive. Yet inexorably it reminded him of Chicago. The first bee was like the envoy of the vice trust, the second was the ordinary libertine.

Against such natural forces he felt himself to be powerless. A vice commission had recently laid bare the facts, long known to Trench, but he had no faith that any good would come of it. He must learn to think of men and women as bees and orchids. He must not blame them. He must think vileness a matter of instinct, and instinct a matter of chemistry.

It was at this point, when his efforts to be impersonal seemed to be succeeding, that he was intruded

upon by persons. He heard a voice above him on the slope, and knew it for that of little Mildred, the daughter of his washerwoman. "If I was dead, Miss Edith, now if I was dead and going to heaven, I'd want some of them put on me to make me pretty."

He did not catch what the other voice said in reply, but presently the cedars parted, and the two persons came into the path above him, with their hands full of such flowers as he had just tossed away. Mildred ran to meet him, while the lady stood there in the path. He reached out his hand to Mildred, but kept looking at the figure above him.

Fine balance, he thought to himself. It had required a great many vain repetitions of the human biped to produce a girl who could stand like that. She would make a good mother, and at forty she would be almost as slender as she was now.

Little Mildred marched him up the slope and introduced him in her own fashion to Miss Bridgman, who lived in Chicago the same as the doctor, and why didn't he know her already?

"The blossoms are just opening," said Edith Bridgman, "and it really seemed a pity to take so many."

"They are exquisite mechanisms," said Trench, forgetting that he had decided against the adjective. Then he added, "It would be hard to name a finer orchid."

She did not answer at once, but stood looking at him. Then she slowly said, "They declare the glory of God in the wilderness."

There was not much talking on the homeward way. At the trill of a notably insistent cricket, Edith Bridgman remarked that she had always wanted a cricket on the hearth. Trench said "Well," and seemed about to discuss crickets, but ended by merely remarking that he wondered what was the key of the cricket's song.

They came out at the brow of the steep hill and

stood looking down on the Straits of St. Mary, where a can buoy was fading and brightening, like the superficial daily routine of consciousness, on the surface of the deep swift stream. It was pretty dark now, and Trench saw to it that a neighbouring farmer took little Mildred home.

Then he himself took the lady home to the Jackson cottage, where he met her sister, Helena Drummond, and presented her with half his catch. Helena was the wife of John the banker. Trench knew the firm of Drummond and Vevers well enough by hearsay. He knew that both the founders were Scotch, that it was now in the hands of the second generation, and that John lived in a comfortable West Side house built by his father. With Helena was her only child, Robert Ogden, a boy of eight. He learned later that an older brother of Robert had died.

As Trench was leaving, to cross to the American side, Edith Bridgman offered him a share of the flowers, and he took a few for Mrs. Jamison, the old lady who had mothered him during his vacations. Mrs. Jamison was honoured by every white man and Indian for fifty miles around, for in her veins ran noble blood of both races. She had taught Trench to call her Nokomis, the Ojibway word for grandmother. In turn she called him medicine man, Mushkekeewinini.

"Ah, you bring me the mokesin," she exclaimed, catching the flowers to her breast. "But you must take back two and keep them — for the feet of your first child." To humour her, Trench put the two in fresh water every day thereafter, till the blossoms paled. They did not wither, but remained toughly delicate in texture.

He had met Edith Bridgman the second evening after his own arrival. He always took his vacation early, to be ready for the stress of summer work, and there remained only ten days before he must return.

During these he made himself agreeable. Bobbie took to him at once, and together they visited Indian camps.

He rowed the Chicago women across the river and introduced them to Mrs. Jamison and Moira and Shane, and thereafter Edith and Helena went over almost daily. Helena was an ardent suffragist, and the old lady discussed the subject with an insight which astonished her. Helena did not know that in her girlhood Nokomis had stepped in and out of great London houses with as little self-consciousness as if she were in the wigwags of her famous grandfather. "You are tired of being squaws, I suppose. It is a hateful word, and does not exist in the Ojibway language. With us a woman is equay — just a woman. But with us, too, women have sat in the councils. My dear, I shall call you council-woman, 'Gegidoquay.' And this girl who brings me sunlight every day I will call 'Gizhegoquay,' woman of the morning."

On Sunday of that week, Potter, an unsuccessful little man who lived in an unwholesome little bay, came to report that Mildred was sick, and wanted to see the doctor and Miss Edith. They ran down in the Jackson launch, an old-fashioned naphtha affair, and Trench found the child suffering from injudicious feeding. Mrs. Potter, a tawny, fiercely maternal young woman, marvelled at the gentleness and swiftness with which the doctor made his examination, and the way the child clung to him. Mildred was the one thing in Mrs. Potter's life. The cabin was poverty stricken.

On the way back Edith was full of questions about pediatrics, and managed to learn something of Trench's surgical work, and the fact that a certain finger-tip was more useful to him than both eyes.

As they passed the point it blew a gale, and suddenly half the launch seemed to leap into flame. Something had happened to those open rows of naphtha jets. The cutoff was, aft, and before Trench could

move, Edith had thrust her left hand and arm into the flame. She groped for the valve that supplied the fuel, and found it and closed it. She had saved Trench's surgical finger, and scarred herself for life.

When he had extinguished the remaining fire, Trench turned to the victim, and she held up her burnt hand. Instantly there rushed upon him a passionate desire to press it to his lips, and he was surprised at the degree of self-control he had suddenly to exert.

But the impulse passed, and he stripped off his flannel coat-shirt and ripped it into bandages. The girl rocked back and forth to ease the anguish, but she joked as if it were all a merry game. She should never want to wear a short-sleeved dress again, she said, but she thought short sleeves becoming to the doctor, who was now poisoning above her in the tossing boat like a sea gull. Trench unscrewed the oil cup from the engine, anointed the wounds gently, and swathed hand and arm. Never had he done a quicker or neater job, but he would much rather have given his own hand for amputation. That night in a dream he kissed the injured hand, and caught her to his breast. He coldly charged up the dream to physiological profit and loss.

A week later he strapped his suitcase, helped Shane Jamison carry down his trunk, and went back to make sure that he had forgotten nothing. The two cypripediums stood in the old bit of lustre ware that Nokomis had lent him. He was about to toss them out the window when another insane impulse mastered him; and he hid them in his long pocket-book.

Half an hour later he was standing on the deck of the little mail steamer. Everybody had come to see him off. Even Mrs. Jamison had got herself into a canoe, and there she sat with a paddle in her hand, pretending that her son needed help.

"Good-bye, Nokomis," called Trench softly, as he leaned over the rail.

"Good-bye, Mushkekeewinini," she answered tremulously, like the secret voice of all the woods bidding a lover farewell.

He gazed down at the swart and noble old face, and thought of his little mother, tossing somewhere with tangle and with shells. Once more he leaned down and called. "Send for me, dear, if you need me."

The boat swung away, and he lifted his hat to all the good friends on the pier. But what lingered in his gaze was something that fluttered from a right hand — the other being still in a sling. Edith's handkerchief rippled in the brilliant northern air, an evanescent patch of light against the eternal shadow of the woods. So she herself had gleamed across the shadow of his life. Well, he had not made the mistake of offering her that shadow to live in.

But even as he reasoned, he wished that she were there beside him on the deck, that he might throw about her an arm which would neither press her nor release her till he had kissed all that refinement of feature. He walked forward and stood in the bow. The fresh breeze smote him in the face like a restorative, and he vowed that he would never set foot in Drummond's house, where she lived, an orphan like himself.

He thought to end it so. But Trench was the slave of memory, the memory to which many a child owed its life. During that winter he never saw her, and yet the thing was happening to him. The infection was in every vein. His unwilling blood was perfumed with her. The dream he had suffered at Encampment began to recur. Once more the launch would spring aflame, and once more she would hold up her burnt hand, like a child, to be kissed. He would catch her to his breast — when instantly the boat would disappear and they would drift side by side on a black ocean — where steamers called to each other wistfully. She seemed

a patch of phosphorescence, and he another, impotent phosphorescence of reason on an ocean of instinct.

The parting request which he had made to Mrs. Jamison was earnestly meant and seriously taken. In the dead of winter he was not surprised to receive a wire from Miss Moira: "Mother has pneumonia. We must not be selfish, but she wants you to know." Trench had a cold, but he caught the first train to Sault Ste. Marie, was met next day by Shane Jamison with a sleigh, and sped twenty miles down the frozen straits under a lowering sky. Late in the afternoon, far ahead of them, something crossed the ice like a sinister thought. "Timber wolf," said Shane.

He frowned as his gaze followed it. "Last night," he said, "I heard a knocking at the back door, and opened, and there was no one there. That is what I heard the night before my father died. It was his call."

After warming his hands, Trench went up to the patient's room, and found the windows admitting plenty of fresh air. Mrs. Jamison was propped on pillows, breathing rapidly, and coughing a little. The massive, prophetic old face lighted up.

"I knew you would come, and the tribes in Chicago must spare you, because I have something to say to you for their good."

Trench kissed her, regardless of the risk, and made his examination. The red count and white count were satisfactory, and there was some temperature, a fact at which he was rather pleased than otherwise. The heart was not so good.

"Have you any hopes that I am going to get well? I know that what you say will be the truth."

"Yes, Nokomis. Good hopes."

"I would like to live another year," she said, "for two reasons. I want to eat huckleberries again. I want to eat meenin and milk, but mostly I want to see

you married. You brought your Gizhegoquay to see me."

"Not mine, Nokomis,—and I am afraid that talking will tire you."

"I have eyes, my son, and I looked into yours. I still have eyes, and down the years there are children waiting for the right parents."

Trench was silent.

"Ah," she said, "I feel better, now that I have told you. I feel well enough to die. I am a foolish old Indian, who needs to die and learn something. I want to know why Gizhe Manido had to let his son die on the cross. I want to know why it was necessary to kill so many children when my grandfather drove the Sioux out of this country. In my heart there is a birch bark scroll with many questions to ask in heaven. I'll find my husband, and my two little boys, and we'll go to get our answers. There'll be some sort of place where He will answer—not one by one, for there are millions in the class, all hearts together. There are millions in the class, but only One to answer. He'll stand there in a seamless robe with light and a smile."

Trench seemed to choke as he listened. Strange world of the imagination—illusions exhaled by the human brain so soon to be resolved into silence and the winds—why should it exist at all? And why should it tear so at his heart strings? He could not say, but he must try to think these matters out, in physiological terms.

He rose now, and insisted that she must sleep. He administered the heart stimulant, sent Miss Moira to bed, and settled Shane on the couch downstairs in the living room.

The birch snapped in the fireplace, and he remembered the Ojibway tradition that when the hearth burns bright, the spirits of the children who have died are laughing there. But the wind howled outside, and a snowstorm was in progress. It must have been eleven

o'clock when there came a knocking. He heard Shane spring to his feet and go to open the door, for Shane had no fear of ghosts, although he heartily believed in them.

Nokomis was resting quietly, and Trench slipped downstairs. He saw the muffled form of little Potter, standing in snowshoes. Under his arm he carried a second pair, and in his hand a lantern.

Mildred was very sick. She had been taken down a week ago with a chill, followed by a fever. She coughed all the time. Potter had heard that the doctor had been sent for, and he knew he had no right to take him away from Mrs. Jamison, but last night Mildred was out of her head, and to-night she couldn't seem to get her breath. It was awful outside, and probably the doctor had never used snowshoes, but would he come?

Of course he would come. But as he thrust his hypodermic case into his waistcoat pocket, Trench realised that he was taking chances. It would be necessary to charge both Shane and Miss Moira with directions as to what to do in case of a collapse. So Shane aroused his sister, who was alert on the instant.

Trench put on a pair of Shane's boots, to which Potter bound the snowshoes by deerskin thongs. He wrapped himself warmly and set out into the night. The wind seemed to tear his breath from him, even as pneumonia was tearing hers from Mildred.

They took to the frozen straits and kept to them. They hugged the shore, being guided by the roar of the wind in the trees, for the lantern was of no assistance. Trench fell repeatedly, and had to be helped to his feet. But after four miles of this sort of work they got to the bay and saw the dim light from the log cabin.

They struggled in. Instantly Mrs. Potter was down on her knees, slashing the thongs that bound the doc-

tor's feet. But at one glance he saw! Mildred was going fast.

"Calm yourself, Mrs. Potter—" and Trench had her hand in his and his arm about her shoulders.

"Potter, open that window."

"It's nailed down, doctor."

"Open it."

Potter seized a hammer, drew out two nails, and shoved the window up. The storm roared in, but it did not reach Mildred, who was on the other side of a red-hot stove.

Trench lifted the child and her wraps, and stood beside the window. Even as he did so, the final wave of purple swept upward on the little face. There was a last heave of the failing jaw, and Trench turned away from the mother to hide it.

For the next half hour, Trench had his hands full. The mother was as maniac as any woman who was ever put in a strait-jacket, but he managed at last to get a shot into her arm. As for Potter, he suddenly seemed a paralytic.

Trench put Mildred back in the two chairs which, lengthened by boards and lashed together by tarred string, had served for her bed. He closed the sweet eyes. He propped the jaw in place till the lips smiled, as if she were thinking of ladyslippers. Then he sat down beside her, holding a little hand as it grew cold.

Mrs. Potter, partly relaxed, lay on the bed moaning. By and by she struggled to a sitting posture, started to leave the bed, and reeling, sat down on the edge of it.

"This is what comes of loving your neighbour as yourself. If I hadn't let that old Injun have you, I'd have my baby now."

"No, Mrs. Potter. It was too late some hours ago."

"It wouldn't have been if Fred had left the word

last night. He went over to the Jamisons' and knocked on the door, and then he got scared and skinned away for fear of doing what he hadn't no right to do. I'd let all the Injuns in the world die for Mildred's sake."

"We can't tell, Mrs. Potter. We can't say I could have saved her."

"Then what made you open the window?"

"Fresh cold air is the best remedy for pneumonia. I ought to have told you that last summer."

"They wan't no call to tell me then. I'm a poor ignorant fool of a woman, what didn't deserve to have no child. There don't nobody deserve to have children. Just you remember that." She blindly struck the edge of the bed, time and again, with clenched fingers.

"I shall remember it," said Trench, and Potter looked up and shivered. Trench relinquished the little hand, laying it across the breast. He turned his chair, and spoke again.

"You've had her, Mrs. Potter. Nothing can take that from you."

The woman wailed, but checked herself. "It's true. My life wasn't nothing till she come. But God knew that. He knew that! No, he didn't know it—for there ain't no God." She stared at the black window as if a fearful annunciation had been made to her from out the night.

"Mrs. Jamison would make you feel differently. You have been generous to her. She would say that God will not forget that, and will give Mildred back to you."

"I don't see what Mrs. Jamison has to do with us. Here's me and you and Fred, and there lies Mildred. You tell me there's a God, if you dare! You tell me I'm going to hold that baby in my arms again, and maybe I'll believe it."

Trench was silent.

"Shut the window, Fred. I'm cold, and the doctor is coughing."

"You've got to trust something, Mrs. Potter."

"I can't trust things no more. Look at that white thing."

"If I were you, I would trust in God."

"You ain't me. You don't trust Him, and I don't trust you. But you are a good man to come here this awful night. I guess I can stand it without comfort. I got to stand it. You and Fred sit over there awhile. Talk to him if you can. He don't know whether he's foot or horseback."

Trench moved over by Potter, but they could not talk. Mrs. Potter went about her work calmly. She knew what to do. She had helped lay out folks before.

It was only when she brought out a little white dress that she broke down again. "My God, my God! I was hoping she'd be baptised in this. I made it out of a dress that girl of yours gave me. May she never see her baby lying like that."

Even at that moment Trench had a temperature, but the blood retreated from his face. She came nearer and looked at him.

"So that's where it hurts," she said.

Then she turned to her husband.—"I tell you one thing. I ain't going to have another child. And I ain't never going to church again." She threw herself on the bed, weeping with hard raucous intakes of breath.

Trench tried to brush the whole scene out of his mind. He had another patient, and he must get back to her. But how? Potter was obviously incapable of making the trip again, and if a man fell with snowshoes on, he would need help.

At last Mrs. Potter recovered herself and finished her work in silence. The two men sat on into the grey dawn, and the woman lay down and slept.

Then came a shout, and Trench stepped to the window. He saw Shane Jamison standing on snowshoes in the edge of the reeds. Trench went out to him bareheaded.

Mrs. Jamison had had a sinking spell, and if the doctor could come, he was wanted. Trench returned for his things, silently shook hands with Potter, promised to be back when they buried the child, and departed.

One disaster was destined to follow another. When Trench reached Mrs. Jamison's side, she was dead. Miss Moira sat by the bed, tearless, her proud face set to endure the inevitable.

In two snowbound woodsheds, two men fashioned coffins, the one for his aged mother, the other for his little daughter.

A few neighbours were able to make their way to the Jamison home when the mistress of it was laid to rest. The wind sorrowed in the pines, as it sorrowed a million years ago, before the days of sorrow. Miss Moira stood bareheaded, straight and tall, and read the service without faltering. Trench was one of the bearers, and he too stood uncovered in the frosty air and afterwards helped Shane fill the grave.

On the following day he stood with Potter and Mrs. Potter beside the grave in the pasture. Mrs. Potter was burying her child without bell or book. The tiny scratch which had been made in the surface of the earth seemed like a chasm, august and forbidding. When the two men had let the coffin down, and both stood trembling in the cold, neither daring to throw the first shovelful, Mrs. Potter turned to Trench, and beneath her tawny hair her face was white as the one now hidden.

"Can't you say nothing?"

Trench could no more have spoken than he could

have raised the child from the dead. He fell to coughing painfully. But with numb fingers he took something from his pocketbook, and knelt, and dropped his two dead flowers on Mildred's breast.

Mrs. Potter bent and put a hand beneath his shoulder, and he seemed to need that help as he rose. "I understand," she said. "You are giving her all you got, and giving up all you got."

And then Trench went back to the desolate Jamison house and had pneumonia. It was a swift and bitter business. Getting a doctor was out of the question, but Moira and Shane stood by as best they knew how. What they found hardest to endure was his delirium, when he kept calling on names they had never heard before.

"Jaffer, Jaffer, can't you see it? Is there nobody about me? Tell Becker to come, before it gets to the door."

"I'm here," said Shane. "What do you want me to do?"

"Stop that white hearse! Stop it! It's there! By God, it's there."

There was a week of this sort of thing, and then Trench knew where he was. He was up north, and Nokomis was dead, and Mildred was dead, and soon there would be silence for him too.

But he did not die. He got well in about the usual time and returned to Chicago. Only — his mind had taken on a permanent set.

To describe him as he was in 1912 or 1913 is not easy. He had no philosophy — to have one would have seemed to him like stopping to dramatise one's self. He was busier than ever, and self-effacing. To call him a materialist or a pessimist would only raise a dust through which the core of his activity would be invisible. But he dealt as little as possible with "per-

sons." To him babies were now water of Lake Michigan, thickened with colloids, enclosed for a while in membranes, and returned to the lake.

Meantime nearly two billion other human beings were pursuing their hopes and fears. On June 28, 1912, the English women who wanted votes began to smash windows at London, while Lord Morley was carefully explaining the theory of democracy at Manchester. On the same day the Democrats were taking their first ballot — preferring Mr. Clark to Mr. Wilson. On the same day certain Turkish troops mutinied, a fact which pleased the Balkan states, who were about to enter upon war with Turkey. On June 28, 1913, Bulgaria, not content with the Turkish territory allotted her, began war on Servia. The Triple Alliance was due to lapse on that date, but the Turkish defeat led to its renewal.

On June 28, 1914,— but we anticipate. All the rest that we have to record comes before or on that date.

I

THE names which Trench had uttered in his delirium were those of medical students who lived in his house. The first floor of it was occupied by a drug-store, and the second by his own quarters, but the third he had divided into six little suites, of two rooms each. He had intended them for Halsted Street boys, but he found that foreign students had trouble in getting rooms, and he threw open his doors to them.

Of the five students who were living in his house in 1913, two cooked for him, and served as office attendants. These were Chatterjee of Calcutta and Wu of Hong Kong.

It was late in August when Trench's cool impersonal way of regarding things was suddenly put to a severe test.

Chatterjee had just gone on office duty. The first man gave his name as Ischl. Chat reported the name to the doctor, who had on his desk a delicate piece of apparatus, which he was repairing.

"Ask him if he owns a clothing factory."

Chat vanished and returned. "He says yes."

"Then I say no. Show him out."

Presently Chat admitted Arschiak, an Armenian painter, whose wife had been killed in the massacres of 1909, but who had escaped to America with his infant son. Trench had seen the child through an attack of infantile paralysis and saved him from being a cripple. Arschiak now unwrapped a package and set a little canvas on the desk, against the piece of apparatus. It was a sketch of the point below Encampment, as he

had guessed it from a photograph he had seen in Trench's library. It was painted in open sunlight, and was really a remarkable little tour de force.

"For me? Why, man, this is worth twice my services!"

"One artist to another, monsieur, with love and homage. You have a Della Robbia above your desk. Pray have the poor Arschiak on it — about here."

After Arschiak had gone, Trench gazed at the little treasure and remembered that day in the launch. How incredibly clear and bright it had been. The mountain on St. Joe had seemed as near as a reformer's ideal. It was the height of rudeness never to have called on the girl who had given her beauty to save his hand.

Here Chat entered and closed the door behind him. "The other man has not gone, doctor."

"Let him in, Chat."

Ischl entered, burly-boned and dewlapped, and started to seat his great frame.

"Stand up," said Trench sharply, as he went on adjusting a tiny screw. "So you are Ischl. Isn't it possible to insult you?"

"What do you mean?"

"You know what I mean."

"I'm damned if I do."

"Well, I mean that you're a bloodsucker and a dirty dog." Here Trench set his apparatus carefully aside and stood up. "Now I've told you what I think of you, and you needn't spare the furniture."

"I come here to get help for a little girl. I ain't come here to fight."

"Well, you can go away again, and go quick. I've done enough for you. I've patched up a scabby little son of yours that you never saw. Get out!"

Ischl stood irresolute. Then he sat down. "I think probably you can knock me out," he said, "but

I'm too heavy to throw out, and I'll kill that brown man if you call him."

Trench took up the telephone and asked the nearest police station for an officer. Then he lifted the apparatus again, and finished adjusting the tiny screw.

Ischl did not take the hint.

"It ain't my fault if my women go wrong."

"I don't say it is."

"I suppose you think I should worry about them."

"I don't say so."

"Then what in hell — I suppose you mean it ain't your fault if my Elsie is sick."

"Quite so." Trench released a cylinder that began to turn silently.

"I ain't sparin' no expense," continued Ischl doggedly. "I've got the best man I know. His name is Ernst, and he ain't so young as he was."

"If Ernst can't cure your child, nobody can."

"Ernst sent me to you. I've got a letter for you."

"Take the letter back and tell him that he adds insult to injury. He introduced me to the world, and now he introduces me to you. You're rotten to the core."

Ischl clenched his fists, but suddenly relaxed them. "I may as well own the corn. Elsie got her trouble from me."

At this point the telephone on the desk rang, and the doctor lifted the receiver — "Yes," he said.

Ischl heard a light crackle, as of a woman's voice, to which the doctor presently responded. "Yes. I was thinking only a few minutes ago that it was inexcusable."

Again the faint crackle. "The little boy? I am very sorry to hear it. I shall be glad to consult with Rowland. Ask him if eleven o'clock will do."

"My God!" broke in Ischl with a roar, "you can't be there."

Again the faint crackle, and this time the doctor turned to Ischl.

"Is this case surgical?"

Ischl held out the note, and Trench read it, and it was profane. Ernst had not been called soon enough. Had he seen the case earlier, it would have yielded to treatment. As matters stood, the child was likely to lose an arm.

Trench turned again to the transmitter. "Yes, it is surgical, and I will attend to it. I'm glad Girling is the next man on the list. Good-bye."

Trench glanced once more at the note. "Mr. Ischl, I wouldn't lift a finger to save your life. But a lady heard you and pleaded for you. Do you still want me to see your daughter?"

Ischl gulped hard, drew out a checkbook, and wrote a check for a thousand dollars. Trench took it and tore it up.

Ischl protested fiercely. "I'm going to pay you."

"You haven't money enough, Mr. Ischl." Trench touched a button. Chat instantly appeared, and was told to send the officer back.

"Look here, Doc," said Ischl, "I know there's girls named Elsie in my shop. You visit my shop. If there's anything you want done, say so. I'll do it, if it puts me out of business."

Trench turned upon him — at the sheer poetry of the man's first sentence.

"You are speaking before a witness. Mr. Chatterjee will not forget your words."

"Mr. What's-'is-name can damn well remember them, then."

"Very good, Mr. Ischl. I will visit your shop to-morrow."

In the best room at the Children's Hospital, Elsie was lying with her right arm and hand immobilised. She was not pretty, for her forehead was square and

her face flat. She was weak and restless. Part of the night she had been in a stupor.

The nurse was mildly busy about the room. Beside the bed sat the white-haired Ernst, famous in his generation.

"Elsie, my boy has come to see you. This is Dr. Trench."

"Is he really your boy?" The voice was very little and very hoarse.

"No, but then you aren't Isabel's mother."

"Yes, I am. Give me Isabel."

Trench lifted the doll and put it close to Elsie's heart. Then he pushed the doll gently aside and bent down to listen. Elsie put up her good hand and fingered his hair. It was not very soft, and it twisted a little at the top of his forehead.

"Can you make me well again, doctor's boy?"

"Of course. You do ask such funny questions in the morning."

"Oh, I wish it was evening. I want to go to sleep."

"Didn't my little girl sleep well last night?"—It was no voice Ischl had heard. It reminded him of a woman dead these three years—dead of a broken heart.

"I don't know. I guess I don't wish it was night."

"Why don't you take a nap, sweetheart?"

"I can't take a nap. Oh, I wish I could take a nap. If you would take me up in your arms, maybe I could go to sleep."

"I will," he said, and knelt beside the bed, and seemed to gather her in his arms. In five minutes she was asleep. In ten she had sunk into the stupor again, and later, in that condition, took the anæsthetic without knowing it.

Ischl went into the corridor. He walked up and down, that big assemblance of a man, tears streaming from his eyes. He saw Trench come out, saw him give

some directions to an interne, saw him disappear into the robing room. Then, like many another father, he went into a waiting room — and waited.

An hour had passed when he saw something white wheeled through the corridor. He was quite sure that Elsie was dead, and put his head down heavily in his hands. Hardly had he done so when he felt a kind touch on his arm, and Trench was saying,

“Here, here, this won’t do. She’s going to be all right now for years, and maybe always.”

II

It was only half-past twelve when Trench got back to his office, and Wu, who was now on duty, reported that Dr. Rowland wished Dr. Trench to call him up, at Mr. Drummond's. Trench complied. Mrs. Drummond had brought Bobbie down from Encampment, sick. It had taken Rowland some time to see the case as diphtheria. He had given ten thousand units, but the child was growing rapidly worse. Rowland would feel better if the case were transferred to Trench. He had said as much to Mr. and Mrs. Drummond, and they had consented.

Trench guessed that what was really weighing on Rowland was his loss of the older child. Otherwise he would merely have repeated his request for a consultation. Trench promised to come at once.

Shortly after one he was admitted to the Drummond house. Drummond came forward, his face tense with anxiety. Helena Drummond was in the third story, with the boy and the nurse and Dr. Rowland. Presently in came Edith Bridgman. As Trench took her hand the impulse again rose within him. Strange — almost sinister — at such a moment!

He went up to the third story, donned his gown, and entered the sick room. Helena greeted him. "This is terribly different from Encampment."

Trench smiled. "He is stored full with summer. Don't worry!"

He went to where Rowland sat by the bed. Bobbie noticed him, in spite of feeling so light in the head, and reached out a hand. It seemed to take all his time and

attention to draw his breath. Trench guessed that within an hour Bobbie would find it pretty hard to do even that much.

Dr. Rowland told all that he knew of the boy's clinical history, and then took his leave with the manners of the old school. As he went downstairs he felt very much chagrined, but he was a Christian gentleman, and knew that he was doing the right thing.

"Well, Bob," said Trench, "I haven't forgotten that you are going to be a scout. Does your breath come pretty hard, scout?"

Bobbie grinned and nodded.

"It will come harder yet, so that your mother will be scared. You know what women are like. Think you can stand it?"

Bobbie shut his teeth — for one second — and nodded.

"If you say so, I'll slip a little tube in there, and you'll breathe easier."

"Ready," whispered Bobbie stridently, and it made his head whirl.

"Put a sheet around him, Miss Neale, good and tight, so that he won't biff me. Saw a papoose in the hospital the other day, Bob. It couldn't sleep, and they couldn't make it sleep. I remembered the one you and I saw in the woods — the one that was set up against a tree. I said to myself, if Bob Drummond were here, he'd tell the nurse to set the kid up against a tree. So I did. And she put a small board to his back — one of those boards that they iron coatsleeves on, and strapped the kid to it — that's good, Miss Neale — and held him upright, as Miss Neale is holding you, and he went to sleep like a coon in the top of a gumtree. Here's the tube — which we fasten like this on the end — like a trout on the end of a fork — while Miss Neale holds the scout's mouth open — from the side — very nicely — with a bridle on the end of a pair of — steady, scout!"

Bobbie was struggling for breath. He was a bear with dogs at his throat. Everything was growing black, like night in the woods.

There was a swift finger-tip in his throat — the poisoning of something exactly beside it, a gentle pressure, and still the finger-tip while the other hand withdrew. Then Bobbie felt himself coming up out of dark, deep water, because the bear — or maybe it was one of the dogs — had jumped down his throat — like Hiawatha down the sturgeon — and let the air in.

“Good scout! Shall have a decoration when the war is over. Hear the breeze whistling up the river. Cough all you please, but I don’t think you’ll cough up that one.”

When Bobbie’s arms were free again, Mrs. Drummond followed Miss Neale into the next room.

“Did it have to be done?”

Miss Neale looked at her sharply. “Couldn’t you see? No, of course not, for I didn’t myself. How did he know that there was going to be that sudden plugging? He deserves his reputation.”

“And it was — a good job?”

“Exquisite. Not a second lost. And gentle — why, I’ve seen lacerations that would make you sick.”

Helena returned to the sick room. Bobbie was still coughing, but the doctor was smiling at him, and the boy was smiling back. His head did not whirl, and the scoutmaster was standing with him, shoulder to shoulder.

Trench gave more antitoxin that evening. Bobbie drank his milk according to orders. Bobbie beckoned to his mother, to indicate that he would like to kiss her good night. Trench shook his head. Then Bobbie reached out and pulled on the doctor’s gown. Trench bent down, and Bobbie kissed him full on the lips. Then the sufferer dozed a while, though real sleep would not come.

Grey morning, and Bobbie got to coughing again, and up came the tube.

"What's this, what's this? Scout carrying concealed weapons? Let me see where it came from? — Ah, sky's clearing up. Pink morning at Encampment. Good day to go fishing."

"*They bite best when it's cloudy,*" said Bobbie, in a drowsy but unobstructed voice.

"So they do, so they do," murmured the doctor. But Bobbie was asleep.

Miss Neale knew that they were by no means out of the woods yet. The next night or two would bring their own problems, and she was glad now to be relieved by a second nurse. But before she slept, she expressed to Mrs. Drummond her feeling that the worst was over.

Helena telephoned the whole story to her husband. "Try — try to express your feelings to him."

Feelings? When Trench descended, Drummond seized him by both hands.

"I'm not a rich man, as rich men go to-day, but you can have anything I've got. I'm going to do something for you. If you can't think of anything better, perhaps I will build you a children's pavilion for the Lister."

"You mustn't say such things to me, Mr. Drummond. Nobody ever did before. I might take you up."

Edith Bridgman brought the doctor his breakfast, which she had prepared with her own hands. He did not know that the silver was her mother's wedding silver and had not been used since her mother died. She said something about the need of beefsteak after a hard night — tried to say something else, failed, and left the room.

III

TRENCH was pretty tired that morning, and handed certain cases over to his oldest student, Becker, and lay down in his office to rest. He could not sleep, however, for he kept remembering Drummond's words. Drummond had of course spoken in emotional haste, and would make no further reference to a children's pavilion. But how tremendously Lister Hospital needed such a thing—a genuine place for bedside teaching for the boys of Lister College. It was no exaggeration to say that the average doctor graduated without sense enough to strip a child before examination, and without knowing how to hold it. Trench's own will was made out in favour of Lister, but it directed all his fortune to be applied toward a research laboratory. He had no heart to begin the enterprise himself, or any enterprise. What the devil was the use of supplying the Ischls with grist?

At the same time, he had the habit. And if the Drummond child got well, and Drummond relapsed into the customary indifference, why, Drummond should in due time be reminded. He, Isham Trench, who had not asked a favour of any human being in six years, would go to the man. He would go at Easter time, when Drummond would be glad that one son was in heavenly bliss and more glad that the other wasn't. He would go, and Drummond would turn him down to the tune of the Hallelujah Chorus.

Speaking of Ischl's, he had promised to go to that hell of a shop and criticise it. He might as well give up this napping business and go. This he proceeded to do. As he expected, he found Ischl in a sullen rather

than a chastened mood. Trench pointed out numerous deficiencies — the inspectors had done it before — and ended by telling him that his wage-scale was a disgrace to a white man. All of which was useless, competition being competition, and Ischl's scale being higher than that of many shops in Rochester and New York.

That afternoon he got a nap, and that evening he returned to the Drummond house.

The night proved better than he had any right to expect. By four in the morning he was reasonably certain that the heart would stand the strain. Nor did he see any reason to change his mind when at six he studied the pulse and the face. He washed up and went down.

Again Edith had breakfast ready for him.

"A very good night," said Trench. "Errors and omissions excepted, Bobbie is going to get well."

"I have been praying for you all night. Your news is just like heaven."

Her hand trembled a little as she poured out his coffee for him. She sat down opposite, but would touch no food until she had seen him begin to eat.

"Somehow," she said, in a low tone, "I am haunted by the feeling that this dreadful disease may be unreal — a bad dream that we have conjured up in our fear."

"You are tired, my dear lady. May I ask where that plant came from?" He pointed to the centre of the table, where a single superb stalk of leaves, freshly cut, rose from a vase.

"It came from Encampment. I brought home twelve, and gave Mrs. Potter a white dress for them. Do you remember them?"

"I remember perfectly. You said that they declared the glory of God in the wilderness."

"And you" — Edith laid down her bit of toast and leaned forward — "said that they were exquisite mechanisms. Did you see my name in the commencement list this June?"

"I regret to say that I did not."

"I took honours in botany."

"Glorious! Let me offer tardy congratulations."

"You'd better, because it was your doing."

"My doing!"

"Yes, sir. I determined to know something about the exquisite mechanisms."

"I trust that they still seem exquisite."

"They do. Every fact I learned seemed like a loving response from God."

Then they ate in silence, and to Trench it was like being married. To glance across and see her sipping her coffee, to receive a second cup himself and note the horizontal movement of her deft hands — as of advance and retreat — it was all new to him.

She finished first and sat regarding him thoughtfully.

"Helen^a telephoned me that Bobbie insisted on kissing you last night. It was very wrong for you to let him do it. You may pay with your life, as Phillips Brooks did."

Trench rose, and was surprised at a sudden tremor of his whole tired body. "I am immune," he said. "My blood has developed its own antitoxin."

"If you were twenty years older," she cried, "I would kiss you myself for saving our boy."

It was nothing much to say, but Trench caught her hand and raised it almost to his lips before his nerves stopped the lever of his elbow. He caught himself in time, and seemed merely to scrutinise the scar. "I wish we could do something for this place on the finger. Some day your wedding ring will partly cover it. Tell him to get a broad one."

IV

WHEN he had gone, Edith stood thoughtfully looking at her hand. How his own had trembled! Then she went to the telephone and called Helena.

"Have you had your breakfast, you old dear?"

"Have I? I'm so happy and so hungry. Has the doctor gone, and is John up?"

"John is not up, and the doctor has gone. He is terribly tired, Helena."

"Of course he is. He hasn't had his clothes off for two nights. You should have seen him, Edith. He chummed with Bobbie like a boy, and then when the little man was asleep he'd sit and watch him like a marble statue. I had the queerest feeling about it. He didn't seem quite human. What fools we women are. Edith, I think I'm going to cry."

"Don't you dare, Helena Drummond! Be cold, be cold like Dr. Trench, for I want some advice."

The telephone seemed to blow its nose violently, and resumed its calm. "What advice do you want?"

"Helena, I want to do something. Bobbie is just as much mine as he is yours. So be a good girl and point out a dove for my offering, and I'll go after it, even if it flies out the window."

"It's dear of you, Edith. I suppose you can send a check to some of the organisations for children. There's the Welfare Association, and the Home for the Friendless, and St. Joseph's Home."

"I was going to do that, anyhow. Which one shall I send it to?"

"I don't know that it makes any difference. When

the husband is a deserter, the children have to be sent to one of the homes for a while, and there are so many deserters that both places need money all the while. Dr. Trench told me last night of a deserted Greek woman he saw last week. Her husband went home to fight the Turks, and survived, but didn't come back to her. She was trying to keep her family from going to either home. She has a baby two months old, and she was starving herself and the baby to get food for the other two children. His young Mr. Deland got track of her and took her two quarts of milk one evening after the children had gone to bed, and she made gruel for herself with the whole two quarts, and ate till midnight. I think the doctor tries to handle such cases personally. He keeps his family of students looking after them, and doubtless pays the bills himself. But it doesn't cure desertion."

"No, I suppose not. But I want action. Can't I work for the United Charities? It won't cost them a cent, and I'll try not to bungle the job."

"You can telephone and find out. I don't know how much responsibility they would let you assume."

"What would I do?"

"I suppose it would depend on whether you were in the office, or out as a visitor. You might ask to specialise in desertion. But you won't get any thanks."

"I don't want thanks."

"Perhaps not, dear, but you want to consider. A friend of the doctor's was in the Court of Domestic Relations the other day for the United, asking to have a professional beggar sent to the Bridewell. A paper wrote him up as the authorised beggar trying to suppress competition!"

"Helena, are you trying to stop me?"

"You know I am not. I just want you to know what you're entering upon."

"Well, Helena, I give you warning that I'm about to

enter upon something. I'll send beggars to the Bridewell, or I'll bring the deserted here and enlarge the family circle, unless you object."

"Edith — you might consult Dr. Trench."

V

THE next day, as Trench came down into the hall, Edith was waiting for him.

"You haven't seen my plants, Dr. Trench. Can you spare the time?"

She led the way to the conservatory, where, in a shady nook, the cypripediums stood in a bank of feathery moss, like green-robed girls awaiting bloom and bridal. On the way back, Edith stopped beside a wonderful begonia rex. "I learned something interesting about the epidermis of begonia. In case of injury, it has a quite exceptional power of restitution. Some guardian angel seems to weave the pattern again."

"That is very interesting."

"Isn't it! When you said 'exquisite mechanisms,' of course you didn't mean *only* mechanisms."

"I'm not a botanist, my dear young graduate."

"Well, you are the inspiration of a college girl; so you'd better answer my question."

"What question?"

"Is it only photochemistry that makes the begonia restore itself?"

"I presume so. But who cares?"

"I care," she cried. "If it's only chemistry in a leaf, you'll say it's only chemistry in me." She glanced at the scar on her hand.

Trench smiled gravely. "I shall not say anything that I'm not compelled to say."

"But if life is only chemistry, there is no heaven. Oh, if Bobbie—" She could not go on.

"We love Bobbie," said Trench, and the child's

father could not have said it more gently. "But love would always stay the passing moment, and nature will not have it so. I say 'nature,' regretting that it is necessary to use any word."

"Dr. Trench — is it possible that you look forward to absolute extinction?"

"Yes. Certainly."

She pressed the scar as if it burned again.

"I have thought of you as the person who opened my eyes to the glory of God's world. I can't get used to the change in a minute. Won't you sit down — here on this long wicker affair where Bobbie loves to read fairy-tales?"

Trench did not comply. "I'm afraid," he said, "that we can't agree about life, unless we agree that it consists of vain repetitions."

"Surely not vain — oh, surely not. You must have practiced a hundred times on dead throats, to have saved Bobbie's living one."

"This is a good place to stop, Miss Bridgman. I'm glad to leave you cheerful."

"Cheerful about what?"

"About the dead throats of other people's nephews!"

She did not flinch. "If I am hard-hearted," she said with dignity, "I am willing to be told so."

Trench sat down. He knew perfectly well that he was a fool to do it, but he had long felt that it would come to this; he was doomed to confess.

"Very well, Miss Bridgman. Let us continue to speak of vain repetitions. There are sunrises, for instance. They are an old story, and I dare say that they tell you the old, old story of Jesus and his love. But to me they are impersonal, and I am glad of it."

"What bitter words! I fear that I have done you no good by asking questions. I have — intruded."

"You are welcome," said certain vocal chords huskily, contracting against their will.

"If I am really to be one of your friends," she smiled, "I must learn more. I think I'll go back to the University and prove that life is a good deal more than photochemistry. If you'll come here in June, I'll tell you the result. Come when the first cypripedium opens. This year it was on the twenty-eighth."

"I'll be here, June 28, 1914."

"Thank you. And now I want to ask your advice about some social service."

"Please do not."

"But I feel so selfish. I am as useless as a cypripedium."

"You are more beautiful than any cypripedium, but beauty is a sex fancy, like religion. And of course you are useless. Use is another fancy."

"Thank you almost to death, Dr. Trench. And what about yourself?"

"I'm an atom. And being an atom I don't believe in the reformation of the world by young-lady power."

"You sound brutal, my friend, but I can't forget Bobbie or our little woodland Mildred. How is she?"

"She is beyond the fear of brutality."

"What—our little one! Oh, was it necessary to take our little flower-girl? She told me that she wanted those flowers when she died."

"I saw her die, Miss Bridgman. I saw that operation. Her mother came out of the ether badly."

"Ether?"

"The ether we call religion. It is what deadens everybody."

"Can you speak so, Dr. Trench? Can you ridicule all this splendid collective effort that is beginning in the churches?"

"I do not ridicule a clinical picture. I see no difference between the parents of illegitimates and the parents of slaughtered legitimates. One group say they couldn't help it, and they couldn't. The others croon

a song called Precious Jewels, and breed again. For such people to organise committees of fifteen is not collective effort, but collective insanity."

It staggered her, of course. She was too deeply shocked to speak.

Trench softened his voice to a professional tone. "Gentlemen, the work of saving sick babies is growing magnificently. The Welfare Association is caring for three thousand a year, and the death-rate is only thirty in the thousand. Very low, gentlemen."

She smiled a little. "I love to hear you speak that way."

"Of course."

"Doctor, you evidently think me securely etherised. If you think my throat needs an operation before it can tell the truth, I'm ready."

Trench looked at her — young, beautiful, beloved — and would have turned back. But he heard within him that echo of anguish — "May she never see her baby lying like that." He seemed once more to be in that lonely cabin on that deadly night. At last he spoke.

"Mrs. Potter told her husband that she would never bear another child, but she has one already. In speaking of it to you, I don't wish to be dogmatic or cocksure, but I do wish to be impersonal and honest. And it seems to me that every child born should be considered a unit in infantry sent out against appalling odds. By using the lives of infants man has overrun the earth. He thins out his own numbers for the greater security of the survivors — and is the only animal who does so. I don't call man the most cruel of all the animals, for he doesn't know what he is doing; he is born callous, and the chemical impulses that drive him give off a religious vapour that deludes him. Still there is the fact — comfort at the expense of infanticide, whether bloodless or armed. And the standard of comfort has risen so

high that a great war is probably at hand. The barometer of the birthrate is falling rapidly, but not because we pity children. We are more considerate of cows, grain, and mothers, because we've got to have cleverer sons to exterminate our enemies. What is going on is the unobserved, scientific extermination of every stupid enemy. The Welfare Association is merely a group of opium-eaters, who don't know that they save weak children because any one of them may have a brain that will exterminate thousands. I do not blame them. I am in the same business."

"Horrible!"

"Exactly. If mothers understood the situation, there would be no children. But it will take a great war to make them see the point, and then they'll forget it."

Edith was silent.

"Now and then," continued Trench gravely, "an animal has emerged who understood it. I conceive Jesus to have been such an animal."

"It hurts."

"I thought it would. Shall I stop?"

"No! This is your confessional!"

"Jesus saw life as it is, and desired its speedy extinction. The mechanism of his agony made him dream of relief. It manufactured an idyllic future life — a perfectly impossible cycle of nutrition without reproduction. He declined myrrh and hyssop, but he offered paradise to the crucified thief, and the uncrucified thieves have been using that drug ever since."

Edith grew pale.

Trench waited a minute till he saw the blood return to her face. "Animal indifference still keeps us going, and women protect themselves. They take this twilight sleep, this belief in a future life for defeated young. Women believe in heaven, and that is why they marry."

"Doctor — I'm strangling!"

"Steady! The blind instinct comes first. With Christ, heaven was an afterthought of mercy. With men and women, it is an afterthought of the reproductive instinct. The operation is over, and you are coming out of the ether. Steady — don't struggle."

But Edith clutched at her throat.

"Oh, base and cruel! And this is your unspeakable philosophy. I don't believe there is a thinker in the world who would subscribe to it. I'll find out. I'll get the arguments. Here and now I declare war on you."

But suddenly her voice softened. "In spite of all your dreadful pessimism, you've got to advise me. I've sent the Welfare Association a check, but that is nothing. It is too impersonal. I want my love for Bobbie to take some better form. I want to be personal — like you."

Trench burst into bitter laughter as he rose. "'Personal like me' is simply stunning. But I can't advise you. Personal effort is a gross illusion, as if one child set out to stop a war. But waste your sweetness where you will."

Edith caught her breath. His scorn had stung her into a bold thought. "I won't be laughed at, Dr. Trench. I've stood my operation and live to tell the tale, but if you laugh at me I'll make you smart."

"You can't."

"Think again, Dr. Trench. You like to be impersonal. But what about impersonal passion?"

Trench stopped short in his tracks. "I don't understand."

"Don't you? Don't you know men who have it? Did it never occur to you that impersonal could be used in that sense? There are wretched girls in Chicago who have been loved impersonally enough."

Trench ought to have expected some such retort, and might have been expected to meet it readily. But such

was not the case. It struck him like an angina, crushing the breath out of him. It disorganised all his old adaptations. In this world it makes a difference who says a thing, and this fact was coming home to Trench as he stood with parted and paling lips. But he recovered from that dismay, and the real Trench spoke.

"I understand you at last. If you can be a personal friend to any girl who stands within that danger, go to her."

"Where shall I go?"

Trench thought a moment, his face set like marble.
"Go to Ischl's clothing factory."

VI

WHEN the doctor left the Drummond house that day, Edith went to her room and thought over the situation. The mirror showed her that her cheeks were flushed, and she found herself walking around the room, unnecessarily putting things to rights.

What had she done? In the first place, she had listened with reasonable politeness to some very extraordinary language. There had been a certain austerity about it, a surgical cleanness, but it had been merciless. In all her life nothing had so surprised her. What else? She had promised to be a personal friend to some unknown girl. Personal friendship with the poor was notoriously a chimera, but she had driven Dr. Trench to a dramatic impasse where he had married her off to some unknown girl forever.

Finally, she had engaged to show Dr. Trench that the chemical theory of life is impossible. At least, she was going to get the arguments. And to understand them, she must do laboratory work.

Before she forgot all the things he had said, she must make a memorandum. She hunted up a note-book, and wrote down every sentence she could recall. More than once she dug the pencil through the paper. She would understand this man. She would analyse him as if he were a starfish.

She told Helena what advice he had given her, but nothing of the discussion which led up to it. Neither did she explain just why she was going back to the university.

At last quarantine was lifted, and the windows were

opened to blow away the last reek of formalin, and Bobbie came down. The car was at the door, to take him out into the air.

"Aren't you coming with us?" Helena put her arm around her sister's waist.

"Not I. I'm off — to enlarge the family circle."

Helena kissed her. "You blessed Don Quixote. But you'd better do a little choosing, as I told you. Take Mrs. Draper's advice."

Edith watched the car whirl away triumphantly. She closed her eyes and spoke within her soul to the Presence there: "You are good to us still. Always good to us."

. Then she made ready and found her way to little Mrs. Draper, of the Woman's Trade Union League. Mrs. Draper received her with a nervous handshake.

"Helena Drummond's sister is very welcome in this office. It's well that you didn't let your brother-in-law bring you, because he scares me with his handsome big countenance before I can really remember my rights. He banks for several of my bitterest enemies."

"Do you really have enemies? How can anybody be your enemy?"

"You are a nice girl to say that. But no member of the Illinois Manufacturers' Association would shed tears if I caught something in the shops, and were driven off in a beautiful automobile hearse."

Edith's eyes looked very tender. "We've just been spared something like that at our house. My little nephew has pulled through a siege of diphtheria, and is now out for his first ride."

Mrs. Draper's mobile face was all sympathy. "I am so glad for you. Maybe Mr. Drummond won't feel so stern toward the factory girls he doesn't know anything about. And now what can I do for Helena Drummond's sister?"

• "You'll laugh at me."

"Maybe I shall, but you mustn't mind."

"I want — a friend. I've always been to school, and Helena's suffrage craze has brought only her own friends to the house. They're very nice as folks go — but they lack flavour."

"I can introduce you to flavour," said Mrs. Draper, thoughtfully, "if you're quite sure it's what you want."

Edith pondered. "Of late," she said, "I hardly know what I want or what I mean. I want to find out whether I can be real personal friends with a factory girl, and it must be a girl whose moral surroundings are against her."

"It's a curious wish, Miss Bridgman, but it does you credit. Praise God, the great majority of the girls are wise in their generation. But there are exceptions enough. I think of one shop — there's no worse shop in Chicago — where no virtuous girl can hope for good wages."

"Will you name it?"

"Ischl's. A girl named Clara Narcisco told me last week that she was going to be a forewoman at Ischl's, and I did my best to stop her."

"I'd like an Italian friend. We spent a winter in Florence when I was a little girl."

Mrs. Draper glanced at her watch, drew a pad of paper forward on her desk, and scrawled an address. "Go over at once and ask for her. And may the good Lord give you tact out of His abundant tactfulness. Amen."

Twenty minutes later, having threaded her way down side streets, up a flight of stairs and between crowded power machines, Edith found the object of her search. Clara Narcisco was sitting in a window and eating a cream puff. Outside the window, on the platform of a fire escape, sat another girl. Edith introduced herself, and Clara brought a chair for her.

"Are you slumming, Miss Bridgman?"

"I am, Signorina, and I wish you to come slumming in my street. The way I keep my room is a sight."

"That is a great big whopper," said Clara judiciously, elevating one end of the cream puff so that it would not trickle. "Anybody whose clothes fit 'em the way yours do don't leave no muss about a room."

"Do you really like this dress? I made it myself."

"It's too plain," said Clara, "but it hangs something elegant. Are you an inspector?"

"No. I'm a sort of fraud, because I don't often make my own dresses."

The girl on the fire escape was listening to all this, and now she leaned forward. "Are you a representative of the idle rich?"

"I am."—As she spoke, she feared she was carrying the pose too far, but she was vastly mistaken.

"Miss Bridgman," said Clara, "this is just as good as a show at the Venezia. We welcome you to our palazzo Ischl. Allow me to present my humble friend, Elsie Shaviro on the new fire escape."

Edith was equal to the occasion, and rose and bowed. "I am highly flattered to meet Miss Shaviro, and I request the honour of both your presences at my mansion this evening to dinner."

"Brava! brava!" shouted Clara. "You done that fine, Miss Bridgman."

"You are to call me Edith. I want you two girls for friends, to have and to hold, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health. You two are it, if you'll have me."

"Quit your kiddin', Miss Bridgman."

"Whom are you addressing?"

"Gee! You dare me to try it on? Well, watch me! Edith Bridgman, did I hear you invite me to eat this evening?"

"You certainly did. I'd rather go to your house, but you don't want me."

Clara looked at her long and keenly, and then she pulled a handkerchief from her belt and pressed it against her eyes.

"You're all right — Edith. But what's the use? I can't go after any pipedream like that. I got a brother and sister to look after. My mother is dead, and my dad — God only knows where he is. Maybe Elsie will go."

The girl on the fire escape leaped lightly in, and Edith saw that she was no ordinary person. Edith could think only of Nazimova, though Elsie's face was untrained to pretence.

"I am a socialist," said Elsie.

"I don't care," said Edith.

"But I do. If I go to your house I am disloyal to the workers. If you would join the socialist party — that would be different." Elsie took off her eyeglasses to wipe them, a process which revealed the loveliness of her dark eyes.

"I should cut a pretty figure joining the socialist party for love of you," said Edith. "All I know about socialism was learned in one quarter of economics, and it struck me as what Clara calls a pipedream."

"Of course it did. But if you would be as poor as Clara and me you'd be a socialist."

"I ain't so sure of that," interrupted Clara. "I'm a good Catholic. It's only Sheenies like you that get nutty over socialism. Anyhow, you ought to give the poor little rich girl a chance. You can't say, Edith, I'll love you if you'll send a hundred beans to socialist headquarters."

"That's so," reflected the Yiddish girl. "Could we be friends for a year, Miss Bridgman, and then quit if you would not have succumbed to propaganda?"

"Yes, that's fair. But you must call me by my first name, and come to dinner."

"I'll call you Edith, and it's a pretty name. But

I'm proletariat, and if I will dine in a rich house I will not feel comfortable. I spend most of my evenings studying. When you would study with me, perhaps we could be friends after all."

"I'm to be in the University this year. But we could spend Sundays together."

"Oh, dear, oh, dear," cried Clara. "I was the first one she spoke to, and now I ain't in it a little bit. I ain't highbrow enough. I see little Clara going with Gino and Maria to the nickel show forever and ever."

"Do you love the theatre?"

"Do I love teatro? Santa Chiara, what a question! There's girls in this shop that would go wrong to get a ticket."

Edith opened her pocket-book. "You give this dollar to some nice old woman to get dinner and stay with Gino and Maria, for you and Elsie and I are going to see the best play there is in this town to-night. *La prego unilmente.*"

Clara took the dollar bill and put it back into Edith's pocket-book. "If Madonina can talk Italian, she is coming to eat spaghetti al pomodoro with Clara and Gino and Maria. Altro! The awful Sheeny can come too, and we three will go to the big show." She suddenly leaned down and kissed Edith, and friendship was sealed.

Clara's quite unexpected surrender seemed to impress Elsie.—"If you are going to Clara's house, you must come to mine. My sister is going to be married next week, and you may as well see what we are like."

"I shall be more than happy to come. And isn't there something friendly I can do for you? Think hard, Elsie."

"Well, when you would help me with shall and will and should and would and a few things like that, it would be very kind. You could call me down every time I make a break when I talk. And I'm reading

Westermarck, and I could write out the main things in each chapter, and send them to you, if you would be so very kind and correct them."

"Splendid! Send your papers to me at the address I'm pencilling on this card. Do you mean the Westermarck who wrote about the origin of moral ideas?"

"Yes. That's the man. I've written one chapter already."

"Here, you girls," cried Clara, "don't you get agoing on any more highbrow stuff. The whistle's going to blow pretty quick. But tell me who sent you here."

"Mrs. Draper told me your name."

"Mrs. Draper's all right, but she's too swift. She wants us to organise this shop. You ought to see my girls upstairs. They're just over and they can't speak a word, and they don't know enough to go in the house when it rains."

"We did think of organising," said Elsie, "but there's a good reason why we aren't trying just now."

"What reason?"

"Because Ischl has turned decent already so sudden. Look at the new fire escape. He was reported already by the inspector time and again, but he's got such a drag that he ain't got to obey the law. Look at the new fans — why, we nearly died this summer with the heat. Look at the carpenters over there. That place wasn't fit for a decent girl to go into. There's handrails on the stairs and rubber on the steps, and they're fixing the exits. And, listen, Edith Bridgman, last week he actually raised the scale! Ischl is going to die."

Clara tossed her beautiful head. "'Tain't that, Elsie. He is cleaning up in my honour."

"I wonder," said Edith apprehensively. Her desire to help was obscuring her sense of humour.

"I'm kidding you," said Clara. "Ischl is scared. There's going to be trouble in the shops again this

THOSE ABOUT TRENCH

winter, just like we had three years ago. Things is awful dull, and the girls are working for nothing."

"Never you mind, my dear! I promise right now to go on picket duty with you and Miss Starr. And if we get arrested, my sister will bail us out."

"You're all right, Edith. But there's worse things than being arrested. Flesh and blood can't stand what I stood across the street."

"What was that, Clara dear?"

"Why, I was over there and I was an experienced girl. I knew how many coats a girl could make. To make them good with small stitches I could make seven in ten hours. Well, the boss comes along and he says to me, 'I want ten coats a day from you. I want all these girls should make ten coats a day.' 'Basta, basta!' I says, and I stuck my fingers in my ears. 'I don't mean no basting,' he says, 'I mean whole coats.' 'Well,' I says, 'you're the boss, but no greenhorn can do it. I'm an experienced girl,' I says, 'and I know. They can't make five!' 'Let 'em take the coats home,' he says, 'if they want six dollars a week.' Then he went off, and the greenhorns had to take coats home and work fifteen hours and they couldn't make seven coats then. He kept coming round to me. 'I want somebody to make them fools work,' he says. 'The contractor he cuts me twenty-five cents on a coat, and I got to live.' 'You got to live, have you?' says I. 'You're a rich man and you talk like that. What about me? Where do I come in? Ain't I got to live?' 'Oh,' he says, 'you're pretty. You don't have to work.' He wasn't far off and I slapped his face for fair. 'Come now, Clara,' he says, 'I didn't mean nothing. I'm going to make you forelady so you can learn 'em something.' First I didn't say nothing, I was so mad. But then I began to think about little Gino and I began to cry. 'All right,' I says, 'I'll be forelady, but if you ever speak like that to me again, I'll kill you, and after this

I'm going to carry something that ain't ribbons in my stocking.' So I was forelady. But then I couldn't stand it at all. I was such a fool I didn't pipe that all he wanted me was I should wring the girls out like dishrags. I went to him and I says, 'I'm going to quit. I'm going to try it at Ischl's.' 'Ischl's!' he yells. 'He'll say things to you I never said.' 'Don't fret yourself,' I says. 'I've got that thing in my stocking yet.' Would you blame me, Edith?"

"No."

"Well, I come over here and told Ischl I was an experienced girl and I was a forelady, but I didn't want no job to drive niggers. So Ischl took his cigar out of his mouth and looked at me. 'My forewomen,' he says, 'don't drive no niggers. I seen some handwritin' on the wall. Damn it,' he says — Ischl swears something awful — 'damn it,' he says, 'you can ask Elsie Shaviro. She's forewoman on the second floor, and she's a good one. But I got a fool for a forewoman on the third floor. Mebbe I'll put her back on a machine and let you try to boss 'em. You sure can't do any worse,' he says. And then he showed me a peach of a scale he's just drawed up. 'Well,' I says, 'Mr. Ischl, I guess you did see some sort of handwriting on the wall. I ain't asking what,' I says. 'But I'll say this right here off the bat, that if I give satisfaction there won't be no walkout in this place.' 'Damn the walkout,' he says. 'Go and see Elsie, unless you're sore on Sheenies.' 'Sheeny or Catholic,' I says, 'they all look alike to me in the shop.'"

Clara stopped, quite out of breath, as the whistle blew.

"Wait just a second," said Edith. "I want your address."

"No, you couldn't find it, cara mia. Be at Hull-House at six, and Gino will find you."

“All right. I’ll stay there in the car till he comes.”

“The car! Santa Maria Vergine! I’ll be scared to death and my other dress ain’t much better than this one. But oh, you automobile!”

VII

THEY had an extremely good time at the play, and the very different but very real impulsiveness of all three girls drew them closer together as they laughed and wept at the same things. On the way home Clara confided the fact that the leading juvenile strongly reminded her of her own *innamorato*, who was the best of all possible men, and who had a job in the Chicago Public Library. Edith heard this with satisfaction. Clara was clearly in no danger from Ischl.

During the entire evening Elsie held a long envelope in her hand, and on parting from Edith she handed it over — her first paper on Westermarck. Next day Edith read it, and a baffling thing it was to correct. The author's most significant phrases were there, the harvest of a discriminating eye, but they were innocently linked by curious slang and un-English idiom. To raise the tone of the one and straighten the deformity of the other took Edith a whole evening. But could she have seen Elsie poring over those corrections and fixing each in mind, Edith would have been well rewarded.

That first paper was about marriage customs. As each division of Dante's *Commedia* ended with the stars, so each paragraph of Elsie's summary ended with the Jews. She focused everything on the enslaved condition of Jewish women. Marriage is indissoluble among such creatures as Papuans, Igorrotes, Veddahs, and Roman Catholics, but a Jew can divorce his wife for any one of many reasons. It would be better to be a Moslem's wife — divorceable for no reason at all! In

like manner every part of the Jewish ceremony came in for ridicule. The custom by which the young men lean against the wall and watch the girls dance was a survival of days when girl slaves were put through their naked paces before being bought. The wearing of a kittel, or white cloak, by the bridegroom, was a device to scare the bride with the thought that even in death he was to be her master. The crushing of the wine-cup on the floor was a similar bit of intimidation. And above all, the use of two ceremonies — one religious and one civil — showed clearly enough that the lofty masculine sentiment was hypocritical. In short, Elsie had embroidered Westermarck with her own red thread.

Edith was therefore not surprised, on the evening of the Shavairo wedding, to see Elsie go through the bridesmaid's part without the least attempt at charm of manner. A proud oriental figure she made as she stood there by the white canopy, but a certain calm disdain flashed from behind her eyeglasses as she watched Rachel march seven times around her Marcus.

Perhaps if Marcus had been more to her liking, Elsie would have had more patience with the ancient ceremony. But Marcus was what is technically known as an "allrightnik." He united a profound veneration for antiquity with an insolent adequacy in the clothing business. Rachel was graduating from the dingy flat to a rococo house near Douglas Park.

When the ceremony was over, Marcus made his *Drosche* speech, and was rewarded at the end of each paragraph by the presentation of a gift for his bride — or himself. Edith listened with amazement as he turned toward her and began to talk about dishes. He quoted from the Talmud concerning clean and unclean. He told how a Jew had turned the tables on a goy by giving him the uncleanest of *tref* basins to wash in. Then he had the nerve to refer in luscious terms to the friendship of Rebecca and Rowena, and stopped.

Elsie whispered to Edith. "The fool expects you to bring him a cup or something from the set you are giving Rachel."

Edith flushed, but rose to the occasion with plenty of dignity. As Marcus waved a bit of Limoges in air he cried, "It never came from Klein's!" and the crowd cheered.

The disgusted Elsie drew her friend away. "I want you to come in my room and see where I live."

They entered a little rear bedroom. It was doubtless a dark room in the daytime, but it looked very cheerful now.

Edith glanced at two photographs that stood on the dresser, and Elsie advanced and picked one up. "I cut this out of a magazine and pasted it on an old photograph, because it looks so much like you."

Edith laughed, but she was touched by the little tribute. "You shall have a photograph of me by the very next mail, and I'm going to photograph you myself in about nine different poses."

"Eyeglasses and all?"

"Yes, indeed. The eyeglasses are a part of your beauty."

"I'm not beautiful, Edith. I wish I was, but I'm not."

"I would not hear your enemy say so, honey. When you get a little bit wrought up about socialism, you look like a French aristocrat ready to go to the guillotine. Who is this other person?"

"That's Marie Sukloff, and they're scared to death of her in Russia. When I see a farce like that in the other room I wish I was a revolutionist, too."

"I thought it very impressive."

"Oh, yes. Mothers have to weep. But it's a long time since I heard a prayer, and I never want to hear another."

"Don't you go to the synagogue?"

"No. I wasn't to Shul in two years. My folks feel awful about it, but there's no sense in religion. It keeps people contented with things as they are, and everything is all wrong. Folks think too much about heaven, and not enough about earth. We've only got one life."

"Do all the socialists feel that way?"

"Most all of them. They tell about Christian socialists, but I never saw one. It will be a monstrosity."

"Would be," murmured Edith. "I hate to correct you, dear. You say there is no sense in religion, but there is certainly none in idioms."

"Edith, are you going to try to make me religious? If you are, we can't be friends. Suppose I got married without any nonsense like that in there, or any marriage certificate. You wouldn't invite me and my man to your house. You know you wouldn't."

"I would if I had a house of my own."

"Would you come to see me?"

"Of course."

"But you think marriage is a sacrament, and I think it's a habit."

Elsie was sitting on the edge of her little bed, and Edith came and sat down beside her. "My dear, you aren't going to put me to any such test, are you?"

There was silence for a moment, and then Elsie smote her white hands together. "I don't suppose so, oh, I don't suppose so. The right man will not come along. But if he did come—I would go with him even if he was married."

Edith was silent.

"I know what you're thinking, Edith Bridgman. You want me to be perfectly respectable like your friends. You say your sister works for suffrage, but people like you and her don't know anything about it. Russia is the only place where women are alive."

"I've read about them, dear. I've read 'Anna Karenina.'"

"Piffle! I hate to be jabbed with a hatpin."

Edith was silent again for a little while, but her blood was slowly rising.

"I thought you were a socialist."

"I am, if there ever was one."

"Well, I thought socialists stood for peaceful revolution."

"We do. We believe in the ballot box."

"Then why do you talk like Emma Goldman?"

"I don't. I want love, and I want a child. Emma says that the workers have no business to bring children into the world to be slaves. It's a nasty thing to say, Edith, unless you are going to be a nun. I want a child, and I want him to grow up and fight for the workers. And I'm twenty years old, and haven't seen a man who has any fight in him. I won't marry a creature like Marcus. My husband has got to be willing to die for the workers."

"Well, my dear, I can't object to that — unless he is already married before you meet him. May I tell you a secret?"

Elsie put an arm around her and drew her close. "Maybe you *are* a friend," she murmured.

"It isn't much, but I have refused two men because they were not the kind I could look up to."

"I thought it was going to be more of a secret, but it's quite a good deal. I suppose they were both rich."

"One was. The other will be."

"And you didn't dope yourself with the idea that you could use your husband's money to help the poor. The poor! Say, Edith, you ran a risk making love to Clara. She was one of the girls who smashed a movie that some of your friends took in the Italian quarter. She's sweet as sugar, but when she has told you about that stiletto she has told the truth. Oh, what a mixup

folks are! Clara's a Catholic, but what's the difference between a Catholic with a stiletto and an I. W. W. with a gun?"

"None at all, my little bunch of black pepper. And they are both like a socialist without a wedding certificate."

Elsie pondered, and saw the point quickly enough — but thought is not always efficacious. "I will make no promise," she said, haughtily. "You judge everything by your silly New Testament, just as my folks judge by the Talmud. You haven't any passion or any courage."

Edith's love for Elsie was only a week old, and infant loves are easily strangled. "I think you'll find, Miss Elsie Shaviro, that the New Testament is about as impassioned and daring a book as was ever written. The third of John is the boldest thing ever said on the planet. But you are so wrapped up in Jewish prejudice that you dare not read it."

Elsie lifted kindling eyes. "You've got more stuff in you than I thought, and I won't take a dare." She turned and gave Edith a vigorous kiss, and infant love got its breath again.

VIII

THE preceding events bring us up to September 11, shortly before Lister opened for the college year 1913-14. All of Trench's family of students had stood by him through the summer except the one Yankee, who was working in a boys' camp, and who had now returned.

On September 11, the Persian student, Ameen, went over to Lister to carry a message to the dean. He found the "old man" conversing with a new student — apparently some sort of oriental. The dean's eye brightened at once.

"I was on the point of telephoning you. This is Mr. Saadi Sereef of Bokhara, and I want to place him in the care of Mr. Ameen of Isfahan."

"You could do me no greater favour, doctor. Salaam alêkom, Mr. Sereef."

The stranger arose and bowed gravely. "Wa-alêkom salaam, Mr. Ameen."

"So that is the way orientals salute each other," smiled the dean. "Salaam means peace, does it not?"

"Yes, doctor," said the new student. "It is first principle of my religion to say peace and mean war."

The dean turned to Ameen. "Mr. Sereef comes to us from Vienna, with credentials which cover four years above the Matura examination. He enters with us as a junior, though I suspect that he knows more surgery than most of you. He would naturally report to Dr. Trench. He has been in Chicago a month, but if there is a possibility of changing his boarding-place — well, I leave that to you."

Ameen delivered his message, and the two orientals bowed themselves out.

"Who is Dr. Trench?"

"I live with Dr. Trench," said Ameen, his dark eyes glowing like pansies, "and the deau meant that perhaps we could find room for you in the Caravansery. That is what I call his house. It is in Halsted Street."

Saadi Sereef nodded. "I know Halsted Street. I went to Hull-House to find teacher to teach me idioms. I know all American slang."

Ameen laughed. "In the Caravansery we have a sophomore who will keep you in practice. His name is Deel'nd, spelled Deland, and he comes from Salem in Massachusetts."

"Where you learn such beautiful English, Mirza Ameen?"

"Do you think I speak well? I try very hard. I began in the Protestant College in Beirut, and I have done much translating."

"I will never learn beautiful English. I always say v when I should say double-you."—This piece of self-criticism was entirely accurate. Saadi never captured a w.

"I shall never speak good English," he repeated, "but you and I can talk Persian."

"As you wish, but we stick to English at the Caravansery. It is our only safety, because there are Wu and Chatterjee and Becker."

"Chinese, Bengali, German," commented Saadi without enthusiasm.

"Becker is a Russian."

"Becker should not change good Slav name. I do not like Germans, and Germans do not like me. Well, you offer me room in Caravansery?"

"Yes, Mr. Sereef, subject to the doctor's approval. It is the room Dr. Jaffer had for two years. Jaffer likes the Germans as much as you dislike them."

"Dr. Jaffer is from Stamboul?"

"No, from northern India. He is there now, as *interne* in a private hospital. He is coming back next June as *interne* at Lister."

Saadi Sereef counted the names over on his fingers: "Ameen, Wu, Chatterjee, Becker, Deel'nd, and Jaffer. It is not Caravansery. It is Menagerie."

Ameen laughed again, and wondered that his new friend could say such things without the shadow of a smile. But when Saadi Sereef presently put his hand on the back of his neck and pressed it, while lines deepened between his eyes, Ameen understood.

"You are in pain, Mr. Sereef. I think you must surely join us in Halsted Street, and let Dr. Trench take care of you. His specialty is pediatrics, but that will make no difference."

"It will be very proper," said the sufferer, drawing in his breath sharply. "I feel like little child in Chicago. I am what you say wandering kid to-night."

"Shall we go to your lodgings and have your trunk sent over?"

"Pretty quick, yes. First I will hear about Dr. Trench. Is he old man?"

"No. Let me get a book and show you."

Ameen ran up to the library, returned with a copy of "Who's Who in Medicine," and read aloud:

"Trench, Isham, pediatrician. Born Chicago, April 23, 1882. Son Darius and Eleanor (Isham) T. Matura, Vienna, 1901. M.D. Vienna, 1907. Resident physician, Lister Hospital, 1908. Instructor in Pediatrics, Lister College, 1909-1910. Asst. Prof. *ibid.* 1911-1912. Professor since 1912. Adviser foreign students. Member Am. Pediatric Soc., Chicago Pediatric Soc., Chicago Med. Soc. Inventor Trench Kymograph. Translator Czerny-Keller: *Ernährungsstörungen und Ernährungstherapie des Kindes*. Contributor *Amer. Jour. Diseases of Children*, *Archiv für*

Pediatric, etc. Address, Lister Medical College, Chicago."

"What do you think of that, Mr. Saadi Sereef?"

"I think he is wonder, and then some," responded Saadi solemnly. "What for genius like that has he menagerie of wandering kids to-night?"

"To tell you the truth, Mr. Sereef, he does not see much of us. Wu and Chatterjee cook for him, but even they do not know him well. But he unites us in the spirit of science."

Saadi glanced at him suspiciously. "Perhaps he unites you and perhaps he unites you not! I have been in Eshkabad, and I have seen new temple where what you say renegade Moslems and Jews and Christians are united. They are called Bahais, and they think themselves *seikeli rui zemin* — the hub of the universe. Are you Bahai?"

Ameen smiled more kindly than ever. "There are several sects of Bahais, and I am a little afraid of names."

"Why you are afraid to wear dog-collar with name of Bahai Pope?"

"Well," laughed the Persian, "after a life of struggling to wear it, I might awake in paradise and find that God is neither a Muhammadan, nor a Jew, nor a Christian — nor even a Bahai."

"Paradise!" ejaculated Saadi. "I hate and despise religion. I am bad man, Mirza Ameen. I am liar and thief and infidel, and what will you do with me?"

Ameen put a hand on the stranger's shoulder. "I will love you like a brother, and I will call you Saadi."

The grey eyes looked into the pansy eyes. "Well, Ameen, I do not think you are liar, but I am sure you are damn fool. I will join menagerie, and make all troubles for all animals in it."

IX

As the two students were returning through Halsted Street, they passed an Italian bank where shattered glass was lying on the pavement.

"Bank has busted," remarked Saadi, dryly.

"It was a bomb," explained Ameen. "The papers were full of it this morning."

Saadi **stopped** and scrutinised the building. "It was not money they wanted?"

"No. Just a matter of intimidation. Such methods never accomplish anything."

Saadi slowly resumed his former gait. "That is big question, Mirza Ameen. Just now it is fashion to say bombs do not accomplish. But nothing accomplishes. It is no use to explode or talk."

Ameen answered gently. "Your head is hurting you, Saadi. Sometime, when it is well, I should like to discuss bombs with you."

"Help, help!" groaned Saadi. "Baveddin belagerdan!"

Ameen laughed. "It is clear enough that you are a Bokharan. Nobody but a Bokharan would call on St. Baveddin for help. What is so terrifying in the thought of discussing bombs?"

"English, Ameen. Your beautiful English. You will not let me talk bombs in Persian, and I cannot explain in English. I was in New York five months and in Chicago one month, and I have studied English sixteen hours every day, and I could read English when I left Vienna. But I cannot explain about bombs in English."

They reached the "Caravansery." Ameen advanced to the third floor, and flung open the door of Jaffer's study.

"Ahlan wa-sahlan, Saadi! You are among your family."

Saadi gazed. "Firdousi manend -- it resembles paradise, but it cannot last."

Ameen quoted a line from Omar -- whom he personally abominated, but shrewdly guessed that Saadi liked -- and continued to play the host. He showed his new friend that no appointment of comfort was missing, even to the shaving mirror and the telephone. These rooms were such as an indulgent father might have fitted up for a beloved son.

"What I pay for paradise?"

"The price is supposed to be three a week, but the doctor was never known to take it. The chances are that your tuition will be refunded, if you make good."

"My tuition shall not be refunded. I will never take Dr. Trench's money."

"In that case," smiled the Persian, "it will continue to be spent on such things as Jersey cows. The doctor pays for cow after cow that he rules out of inspected herds. Come now and meet the other boys."

"First" -- said Saadi, throwing himself back and closing his eyes -- "first I would like to die here. But we may as well meet all animals." And he sprang up.

At Ameen's knock, the punctilious Wu looked up from behind his spectacles, came to open the door, and received his visitors with a bow. On learning that Saadi had come to stay, he immediately invited him to dinner.

"I will rather not, to-night, because my head is now so bad. But I appreciate Chinaman's salt. In Bokhara, best salt comes from China."

"I believe so, sir. Karshi is on our side of the mountains."

Saadi looked critically at Wu's intelligent countenance. "Mr. Wu does not seem like one of Chinese doctors who cure all diseases with long needle stuck in."

"I bow," said Wu. "And Mr. Sereef would not exorcise filaria worms by an amulet made of a gall stone from the stockyards in Halsted Street."

"Mr. Wu, I like you. You have quick comeback. Best doctor in Bokhara is big fat cook. He cuts out filaria with knife, and then cuts mutton. But in Tashkent is man who can cure filaria with medicine he makes. I will be good to you and tell you where he is living. It is Gospitalnaya numero 400a."

"I will call on Mr. Sereef's medical man when I visit in Tashkent," said Wu with infinite dryness, "and I will reciprocate by exhibiting the stockyards to Mr. Sereef."

Somewhat brightened by these international courtesies, Saadi cast an eye about the room. There were several choice prints which Wu had brought with him. These were not of distant chapels with the rising moon, or of lonely reedbeds with flying fowl. Instead of the conventions, Wu had selected studies of little children. Saadi noted the fact.

"Will you be pediatrician in China?"

"Yes, I have chosen. What is good enough for Dr. Trench is good enough for me. I cannot hope to repeat all his successes, but repetition is the secret of success."

"Shaitan belade! Devil knows if it is worth while to save little repeaters called babies."

Wu smiled, while the western sun lighted his forehead and made it look like weathered ivory. "I am agnostic on that point. But in China we say, 'Szifoo bot ok siz — even the tiger does not kill its babies' — and I will try to prevent the repetition of what I saw in Yunnan. I saw fifty girl babies dead in one field. Famine was not the cause. They were not wanted."

Saadi merely nodded. "It is so everywhere, but in

Bokhara and Chicago it is not custom to use open field. Saadi prefers plenty of kids. It does not hurt them much to die with steel-jacket bullet."

Wu bowed. "I prefer much offspring and much peace, Mr. Sereef. I trust that your descendants will not quarrel with mine over pink salt."

"Mr. Wu, you trust too much. You are damn fool."

Wu bowed. "Your judgment is approximately correct."

Saadi stared, and for the first time laughed. "Jivio! Well, Mr. Wu will be pediatrician. What is worst disease of yellow babies?"

"A certain lung trouble found only in China, Mr. Sereef. Perhaps my grandson will be the Kitazato who discovers a remedy for it."

Saadi smiled wearily. "If Kitazato had not helped Behring, it would be no diphtheria antitoxin. Well, it has saved million boys. In one year more, Behring kids will operate Kitazato kids with bayonets. That is progress."

Wu bowed. "We cannot turn back, Mr. Sereef. There will be no absorption of perspiration. And when I have plucked the Kwei flower at Lister, I will go back and sweat with the rest."

He showed them out, and went downstairs to start dinner, while the visitors proceeded to Chatterjee's room. They found him in his native clothes, into which he often slipped when the weather was warm.

"A Bengali knows nothing whatsoever about Bokhara," he said, shyly, "but if Jaffer were here he would be aware. He lives in Peshawar. He has probably intervisited and interdined with Bokhara."

"There are many Punjabis in Bokhara," answered Saadi. "Some are bringing tea by Persian Gulf, and little bit comes by Kabul."

"I am glad you like tea in Bokhara. We do not

drink it in Bengal. In good sooth, however, the British drink much tea."

"It is good enough drink for British. You hate British?"

"No. But many do."

"I hear you when you say so, Mr. Chatterjee. But you are three hundred millions with Ehrlich's sleeping sickness. If you would what you say swat the fly — just seventy-five thousand little flies — you would get well. But I don't care. You are only damfool Kali-worshippers."

"I am a Brahmo, like Dr. Trench," said Chat quietly.

"What is Brahmo?"

"A sort of Unitarian."

"How you know Dr. Trench is sort of Unitarian?"

"Because like Rama he is the friend of living creatures. You will find that the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man is his credo, or some such thing."

"Well, if God is like my father, he is barbarian. Now I will go and insult other animals and then go to sleep. It is better to walk than to run, better to sleep than to wake. You know rest —?"

"Better to be dead than to sleep," finished Chatterjee. "I hope you will rest well in Jaffer's room. I hope too that you will breakfast with us."

Ameen took Saadi to Deland's room and left him there. Deland had yelled a careless "Come in," and removed his long legs from the table.

"Proud to meet you, Sereef. Do you know this little old burg pretty well?"

"No, Mr. Deland. I have had nose in book all summer."

"Sit down in chairs and ask me questions. Here's the map by wards. Highest infant death-rate is in the first and seventeenth, followed by the twenty-ninth and sixteenth. Nineteenth used to be the worst, but Hull-

House yanked the death-rate down. Miss Addams got herself appointed garbage inspector. What do you know about that?"

"Well, I saw Miss Addams in Hull-House, and what I know about that is if Miss Addams has garbaged she has garbaged with dignity and distinction. I wish Franz Joseph would let her clean up diplomat garbage in Vienna."

"What I want to be is a health officer," continued Deland. "Dr. Putnam of Boston sent me out here to be next to Isham."

"Eyesham?"

"Yes, that's Dr. Trench. And Dr. Trench gives me the right steer about it all the time. Funny he never went in for public medicine himself. But dear me suz! — look what he does in his own township. Internist *and* surgeon — that's what Isham is, and he's got the neatest hand in Chicago, and as for a clinical eye — he'll just look at a kid and see right through the exterior integument down into the gizzard."

Saadi listened with gloomy admiration.

"I will come and you will give me lessons in American. What you do in summer?"

"I was counsellor in a boys' camp. That's the kind of thing I like — games, athletics, canoeing. And I planted a cross in our camp. Made it of birch."

Saadi scowled. "I do not wish to hear. It is all damn foolishness."

Deland opened his blue eyes wide. "You've got another guess coming. If it weren't for religion, life wouldn't be worth living."

"Life is not worth living. I cannot explain to you. You are boy. I am old man."

Deland flushed, and sat down on the table directly before his visitor.

"Say, old man, I wish you were a Christian."

"Mr. Deland, you are damn fool. You don't know

that Christianity is damn failure. Dr. Trench could put you next."

"Dr. Trench is a Christian," said Deland stoutly. "He's the kind of man I want to be."

"Did you once ask Dr. Trench is he Christian?"

"I don't need to ask him."

"Well, I will ask him myself is he Christian, and I bet you one million microbes he says no."

Saadi rose, and Deland slapped him kindly on the shoulder. "Say, old man, you're a kidder from Kidderville. Come on now and kid Becker by your lonesome, for I've got to run over to the Juvenile Court building."

Becker proved to be big and rosy cheeked. He might have passed for a Teuton, but the visitor was not deceived. As soon as they were alone, Saadi folded his arms.

"Pig of Jew," he said, gloomily.

"Dog of a Moslem," retorted Becker promptly.

"How old are you, Mr. Beckerovitch?"

"Twenty-five."

"Well, it is same here. We are two old men. Where were you in 1905?"

"Moscow."

"And where were you in 1906?"

"In prison nine months. Then a year near Archangel, with nothing to do but think about it. I got away all the same. And I brought my mother's best pillow with me."

"We will shake hands, Beckerovitch. But—you will please not mention mothers." Saadi's voice was trembling.

Becker nodded slightly, and resumed. "Were you ever locked up?"

Saadi controlled himself. "Suremike. I was guest of Nicky six months."

"We knew in Moscow that there was fighting in .

Tashkent, but we did not know much about our comrades there. Well, it is all over now."

"Yes, it is all over. Too — bad, oh, too — bad. It was no use. Nothing is of use, except maybe body. Oh, you beautiful white human body. Maybe I will what you say bust loose in Chicago."

"That's a rotten thing to say, my friend. That won't go with the doctor."

Saadi scowled. "Doctor won't know."

"Make no mistake about that. He will look at you some morning and you will feel like an interne who failed to wash before operating."

"I don't care. Always I have kept clean, and Bokhara is not clean. But revolution has failed, and always revolution will fail. I don't care one micrococcus."

"Well, I care. Come and have supper with me."

"No supper for me to-night. Only nice soft pillow like Becker's mother gave him. I wish it was pillow in dead-room. I was in hospital corps last year in Old Servia. Dead-room was only room with ventilation."

"So! Do you think they are through their troubles for a while?"

"Shaitan belade! devil knows. Soon Austria will jump on Servia. Then Russian intelligentzia will march with mujiks."

"Stuff and nonsense, Mr. Sereef! We socialists will never sacrifice our ideals like that."

"Mr. Beckerovitch, you are damn fool. How began all massacres in world? With ideals, by golly. French revolution began with ideal, ended with hæmoglobin. Turk revolution began same way, ended same way. In 1908 Turk and Christian did kiss each other in streets of Stamboul, then Turks murdered thirty thousand Armenians and ten thousand Macedonians. All you socialists need is one little excuse of body —

just these fool words: ‘Defence of homes.’ Spokoine noche — *good* night!”

And having called each man a fool without disturbing any, Saadi went to Jaffer’s rooms, threw himself on Jaffer’s bed, and burst into deep sobs that no man heard.

X

IT was eleven o'clock that evening when Trench got away from his last consultation. Having no car of his own, he dropped off the trolley-car at his corner, and stood fanning himself with his straw hat. Theatre crowds were going home, and Halsted was alive with young folks. Opposite his house a screaming woman was being put into the patrol wagon. Down the side streets everybody was out of doors. Babies were sleeping on steps and pavements, and passersby were careful not to tread on them. On the porch of a synagogue men were lying like the dead on a battlefield.

Halsted Street runs for thirty miles north and south over the level bed of an ancient lake. Trench thought of the St. Mary's, that stream of melted glacier, and wished that such waters once more rested here. If the lake were back again, it would reach to the top of his house. His eye travelled upward, and he saw a light in Jaffer's room.

Burglars? No. Ameen had probably found a tenant. He would go up and see. He let himself in by the side door, ascended wearily to the third story, and knocked. There was no answer. He turned the knob, and was driven back by a burst of gas. The light he had seen came from an electric bulb in the study. He groped his way to the hall window, pushed it up, and stood gasping. Then he took a long breath and went through the rooms, turning off the gas and opening windows.

In a few minutes the rooms cleared, and he switched on the light at the head of the bed. What greeted him was apparently the body of a young and oriental Bona-

parte, dead before he had won a victory. The shaded white ray fell on both their faces when Trench bent above the body, as some pitying Girondist might have bent above the Corsican, had he died as a cadet. Then down on his knees went the doctor, with ear pressed to the boy's chest. What he heard reassured him.

He took the pulse now at the wrist. As he sat on the edge of the bed he loosened the high collar, for the stranger was fully dressed, and in so doing noticed at the nape of the neck a long scar, faintly flushed, and apparently the work of a sword. Still holding the wrist, Trench shifted the shade of the electric bulb till the ray fell squarely on the closed eyes. In a few seconds the stimulus was effective. The eyelids quivered, opened, and closed again. Trench shifted the shade back, and took his seat at some distance from the bed.

In a few minutes Bonaparte stirred, moaned, and began to mutter incoherent words of some stock unknown to Trench. The incoherence passed, and the boy lay still. Presently a low voice began to speak English.

"Is it Dr. Trench?"

"Yes. I apologise for interrupting the experiment."

"I am damn fool configuration of energy called Saadi Sereef, and I am sick in solar plexus."

"Your stomach will be all right in a little while, and you will find me in the next room." So saying, Trench went into the study and began to consider his appointments for the next day.

By and by the low musical voice called to him. "It is better now, but my head will split."

"In a minute," said Trench, and slipped downstairs for a sedative. When this was administered, Saadi lifted himself in bed, and the doctor propped him with pillows.

"Before I died I was going to ask you, doctor? Are you Christian?"

"No."

"Do you believe in Bog?"

"What is 'Bogue'?"

"Excuse me. I mean gaseous vertebrate called Allah. Do you believe?"

"No."

"That is good. Do you believe Saadi has ghost?"

"No."

"That is good again. It is bad enough to die with Dr. Trench's perfectly good gas, but it would be too much if perfectly good gaseous vertebrate should lecture ghost. Half hour ago I was happy nothing. But now I am same old fool something. Too — bad! Why you wake me up?"

"I don't know."

"You do not care if I should die?"

"No."

"If I would have typhus, would you nurse me?"

"Of course."

The low pleasant voice summed up conclusions. "You care not one damn if I die, but you would die for me."

Trench smiled. "It does sound rather absurd."

"It is not absurd, doctor. It is deep."

Trench was silent.

"Doctor does not ask questions, and Saadi is much obliged. What is in medicine?"

"Only bromides and codein."

"Of course. It does business. By and by I will sleep."

"You can't begin too soon, Mr. Sereef."

"You will call me Saadi. You have saved my damn fool configuration of energy. It is kismet to be grateful. When you call I will answer."

"Thank you," said Trench dryly. "Meanwhile, what assurance have I that you will be alive to answer?"

"Well, I could go down and sleep on divan in doctor's office."

"Are you afraid of yourself?"

"Yes, doctor."

For answer, Trench gently pulled a pillow from under his patient's head, and settled him in bed. He let a light hand rest for a moment on the boy's temples. Then he darkened the room, and lay down on Jaffer's leather couch.

XI

TRENCH was awakened by a noise, but not that of Halsted clanging into its sweltering day. He sat bolt upright, and saw Saadi Sereef. Saadi was studying a map in the Britannica, while he unconsciously tapped the desk with a nervous finger-tip.

"Good morning, Dr. Trench. It is five o'clock, and my head does not ache much, and I have bathed dam-fool body."

"I usually get up at five," said the doctor, proceeding to the telephone. "Is coffee ready? Will you bring some to Jaffer's room?"

While the doctor was absent for his bath, Wu entered with a tray. There was a steaming coffee-pot. There were blue grapes in a blue dish, hot rolls wrapped in damask, and a tiny Chinese hen sheltering boiled eggs in a porcelain nest. Wu held up a salt cellar. "Not pink," he said, "like salt of Karshi, but equally good for purposes of friendship."

Wu placed the tray on Jaffer's desk and moved the desk to the window. "If you sit here you can see down Halsted Street and imagine the people — Austrian, Belgian, Bulgarian, French, German, et cetera."

Saadi caught up the refrain. "Greeks, Hindus, Irish, Poles, Russians, and all other slaves. Bog milui — God help us."

The doctor presently returned, and the two sat down. Saadi sipped his coffee and looked out into a sunsmitten vista.

"Why they call it Halsted?"

"The Halsted brothers of New York bought a front-

age up by Goose Island. Dr. Halsted of the Hopkins is a son of one of them."

"And why does doctor live here?"

"My father's first house stood here."

"Why you did not build house in Lake Shore Drive and doctor babies of too-busy rich?"

"Couldn't afford to."

Saadi cocked one eye and then the other, like a dog who much desires what is withheld. "Are you philanthropist?"

"Oh, lord, no."

Saadi waved his hand and selected a small bunch of grapes. "I know all. Doctor has some big internal wound, like Saadi, and doctor is naturalist without courage. To Halsted he comes, same as monk goes in desert. Here in desert doctor would cure all diseases if they would permit. But when baby machines go wrong, parent machines call in gaseous vertebrates to help. Now is doctor waiting for Halsted Street to outgrow all gods and bogs and allahs, and get down to business, which is metabolism. Do I know part?"

"Yes."

"If races will get together in Halsted and be civilised, it must be on atheistic bottom. What makes foreign boys come in Dr. Trench's house? Is it Mirza Ameen standing on roof and calling 'Come to prayer'? It is not. It is nice smell of clean hospital. It is microscope and Trench kymograph. And it is Dr. Trench, who did not give one damn if I died."

"I bow, as Wu would say."

"I bow back, Dr. Trench, for I think you are awful strong man, because you are not person; you are machine. One machine gun can lick whole army of priests and mullahs. But even if races get together on atheistic bottom, they will fight. By and by it will be war in Halsted Street. Industrial Workers will march

down street under window here, and it will be much blood in gutters. I will like it if I am here."

Trench set his coffee cup down exactly in the middle of the saucer, and addressed it. "First a suicide, then a maximalist."

Saadi lost his sprightliness. "No, doctor. It was what you say vice versa."

Trench had no further remark to make to his coffee cup, and presently Saadi resumed his former tone.

"Dean gave me credit for four years in Vienna."

"Ah! That makes you a junior with us. Is Wurtz alive and well?"

"Yes, doctor, and this is way he lectures." Saadi put one hand behind him, elevated his glance toward the ceiling, and changed his soft voice to a high nasal: "'Meine Herrschaften! Wir kommen jetzt zur Besprechung Darmkanals —'"

Trench interrupted. "Talk English, Saadi."

Saadi sighed and began again.—"'Gentlemen, we now approach subject of alimentary canal. Length of life depends to very considerable extent on length of alimentary canal. In your case, gentlemen, I could wish length greater. If you had canals which would permit you to exist for ninety-five years, I could perhaps instil a few facts which I am now about to state, and you are about to forget.'"

"Capital!" laughed Trench. "You are a born actor."

"No, I am born fool. But I can speak German. Listen, doctor, it is not six o'clock yet, and if you will let me speak language of bloody Teutons, you will know how bad man I am."

"Fire away, if it will ease your soul. But no German. In Halsted we speak Halsted."

"Soul? Did devil bring me ghost in night-time?"

"Well — we are talking Halsted."

"First, will you give me physical examination?"

"Not now. You are in good shape, except for the wound that bothers you. You might tell me how you got that."

Saadi became very grave. "Doctor has sharp eyes. My father gave me that." He rose abruptly and paced the room.

"It was such little thing to begin with. It was my brother's fourteenth birthday. When Karoul was twelve, my father promised to give him best horse in Bokhara when he was fourteen. But Karoul did foolish thing—he played with Jewish boy. Karoul loved to put on mask and go to bazaar with Isaak Chaim. My father found it out. He sent for Karoul, and dog of mullah brought him in."

Again the speaker paced up and down, like a wild creature.

"My father cursed Karoul, and ordered him to be whipped. Karoul said, 'You will not whip me. You will give me horse and maybe I will give him to Isaak Chaim if I wish.' Doctor! you do not know what such words would do to my father. My father struck, but he is fat, he cannot move quick. Karoul cries to him, 'You beast of tyrant. Sunni boys will smash your windows soon and it will be revolution.' Then my father draws talvar and runs him through. It was such long sword—such little boy."

Trench involuntarily put his hand to his side.

"I was not there," continued Saadi. "Dog of mullah told me. They put Karoul away in night. Where? Nobody dare ask. Then I went to my father. 'Where is Karoul?' 'Karoul is gone to country to my villa in Kermineh.' 'That is lie, my father. Go in Galerie Tretiakov and see how shamed looks Ivan Fourth with dead son in front of him.' Then my father flung talvar at me, and zip, I got it in neck. I picked up talvar and gave back. 'Now,' I said, 'I

will leave Bokhara-i-Sherif. I will not come back till you say you are brute. When you are shamed, you will send me word. My mother will know where to send. You can open her letters — you can open all letters in Bokhara — you will not know from letters! ” ”

“ It is a ghastly story. We must help you to forget it.”

“ You cannot help, doctor. All times I see Karoul’s face. I know where it is. It is in bottom of Zerafshan, with stone round neck.”

Though the morning was warm, Trench gave a shiver.

“ I have spoiled doctor’s breakfast. I have been bad guest.”

“ Forget it, Saadi. But I must say that a brother’s death doesn’t often drive men to suicide.”

“ No, doctor, but it can help. My thoughts were enormous mixed. I did not intend to give you what you say surprise party.”

“ I see. You received it yourself.”

“ Doctor is keen. Biggest surprise was to see what is in Dr. Trench’s house. All boys of different races seemed best of friends, way down deep. Always I have preferred war. This morning again I prefer war. Last night I thought maybe science is enough.”

Trench pondered this. “ Your reasons seem curiously impersonal.”

“ I try awful hard, doctor, to be what you say impersonal. Persons are only damfool configurations of energy. I ought not to yelp with sorrow for Karoul’s atoms in Zerafshan. But my head hurt very bad, and I thought maybe I will go crazy. And I thought if I stay in Chicago I will get some baby and kismet will make me kill him. I said, one like my father is enough, and one like me is too much. All off. This is as far as we go.”

“ I see. It was your fear of being cruel.”

Saadi hesitated, and his voice sank lower than ever. "I can tell no more."

"You need tell nothing. But I was interested in Karoul."

"Well, doctor, it was eight years ago when Karoul went down to feed filaria in river."

"Wait a minute. Let me look at that wound again."

Saadi knelt, and Trench inspected the scar. "Go on."

"I went first to Kabul to see my older brother, Ali Khan. He is doctor — he studied in Riga. Why is Ali Khan in Kabul? He is spy for Nicky. I found out and went away quick."

"To Vienna?"

"Oh, no, not so soon. To Russia. Same month was general strike in Russia, and everybody was happy in hopes. I took tutor with me and kept studying. I went in Moscow, waiting for letter from Papa. No letter — only letters from Mamma Ila with money and sad words. In spring I went to see her, and boys in Tashkent said, 'Come on, Saadi, we will make revolution in Turkestan.' So I fired tutor and went in revolution with boys. I was only seventeen. I wanted to forget Papa and be alive, and we broke down wall of prison in Tashkent, and gendarmes caught me and put me in unbusted part of prison. It was then so bad for six months. Often I wished it was gas or gun. When I came out I knew it is no use of anything. Revolution had failed, revolution will always fail, and parents do not love children. It is all blind chemical push that drives men to have children. It is no sooner done than said — and then what you say makes no damn difference."

Trench was plunged in thought — his own thought strangely given back to him. It dawned upon him, like a differential diagnosis, that this was his own style exaggerated.

"I said," continued Saadi, "I will never marry any woman, but I will have hell of good time and forget all fool dreams. But I could not. Other boys did. It was strange in Russia to see way schools went. Government almost taught freedom. Government wanted boys and girls to be free with each like animals, and forget politics. Boys and girls had all night parties in woods, and parents could not stop them.

"So I went in Vienna and took Matura exam. and entered University to study damn chemical machine called human body. In winter of 1910 what Karoul said about Papa came true. You see, Papa was Vazee, what you say prime minister. All Sunni boys hated him for taxes. He took one-third of cotton crop. So boys in secret societies sent committee in 1909 to Emir, with demand to fire Papa, or we will yell 'Yar charyah'—which is wary of Sunnis. Emir would not hear, and boys smashed Papa's windows, and beat up guard, and Emir was scared. He fired Papa in exile to Petersbourg. Now no more sits Papa every morning in Gate to settle all fool questions. Where is Papa? Shaitan belade—devil knows. But in Tashkent is still his business office, and money from cotton lands goes to him, maybe in Petersbourg or Yalta."

Saadi paused. "Well," said Trench, "that brings us up to 1910."

"Yes, and next year Emir died, and all were glad in Bokhara. Last year came war with Turks, and I went to Belgrad and got in hospital corps and went to Kumano. So little amputation you never saw, but thousands of wounds without first aid."

"You will go back, shall you not, and practice?"

"It is no use. In Turkestan we cure dysentery with blood of sheep poured with prayers on feet and hands. They would kill me if I used modern method."

"What of it, Saadi! A bullet in the neck is pleasanter than gas in the throat."

Saadi pondered this, apparently fixing the words in mind.—“It is true, doctor. But I do not love human sheep. Did I go in revolution to save sheep? No. I went for thrills in nerves. Paradise is only pipedream of thrills in nerves.”

“You are strictly selfish?”

“Yes, Dr. Trench. I will kill, I will be kind, I will lie or steal or seduce girl to please myself. When I say self, I mean body. Me is body. Person is body. Soul is just excuse of body, or else streak of phosphorus long side of body. You see how bad man I am.”

“No, Saadi. But I see how bad your English is.”

“I can say in three four languages, doctor. I am devil come to visit you. I am just body, without apology.”

“Saadi, when people talk like that and mean it, we lock them up.”

“Lock me up, doctor.”

“I don't think it will be necessary. Just remember that language, like most other things, is no use. The world's atmosphere is composed of spent breath, but life is the great miserable unrecorded fact, and sane people let it stay such. People who are too brave of speech get into trouble — as I did lately.”

“I understand doctor, and I did not think he was so what you say conventional. Life is only metabolism, and I do not see what is difference between clean words and dirty words.”

“That's a lie, my dear boy.”—The words came promptly, and Edith Bridgman was responsible for them. A month earlier Trench would not have spoken them. He would have preserved a cold silence.

Saadi stopped, and tried to reflect. “Well, it is nice to have great man call Saadi liar, because I sure am liar. But Bismillah! What use is medicine if body is not me?”

"Well," laughed Trench, "you are right enough there."

"Well, then, I will again talk English. Body is self, and I am ended with good habits. It will be only little time to live before body will succeed to kill itself. Nothing is left but thrills in nerves, and soon I will bust loose."

He watched to see how the doctor would take it. He saw the fine brow slowly contract till a great bunch stood out over the eyes.

"Saadi, it would have been better if you had died."

"Yes, much better."

"Frankly — why do we feel so?"

"Fear, doctor. Doctor is afraid of some woman. We will see if he has courage to fire Saadi if Saadi gets gay."

"Of course I'll fire you. If I know of your wronging a girl — well, as between murder and seduction, I prefer murder."

"Same here, Dr. Trench. But I will do both if I damn please."

"Saadi, we seem to be a bloodthirsty pair, but I have no doubt we are as much under social control as if we believed all the commandments to be of divine origin."

"Speak for self, Dr. Trench, but do not speak for Saadi. You are naturalist without courage. I will not go through fool ceremony with girl. I want rich-coloured, hot-blood girl, and if she wants lover, I take her. When I get tired of her I leave her."

Trench smiled one of the sardonic smiles which children never saw on his face. "You are like all the rest, my son. You are more or less grateful, and the next week you return to the propagation of cannon-food. The other day I saved an arm for a child named Elsie. If she were older and had the right dermal tint, she would be your proper prey. It would serve her father right, and serve me right."

XII

SAADI was registered for pediatrics, and Trench found him quick to learn. During lecture he was always a bright-eyed listener, smiling every now and then. This was odd, because Trench never made a joke, and had a way of imbuing — almost of impassioning — his men with cool attention to detail. Trench in lecture was impersonal as a formula, but when he was fixing a point, his eye would travel from man to man like the fire of the machine gun to which Saadi had likened him.

During quiz Saadi was demure and accurate. It soon became clear that he had anticipated a good deal of the junior work. Furthermore, Trench permitted him to assist at an operation, and Saadi demonstrated that he had seen service in surgical wards.

The leisure thus commanded he was sometimes at a loss to spend. He smoked great numbers of cigarettes in Jaffer's study, brooding over the view down Halsted. In general he kept out of the other fellows' rooms, because none of them smoked, and in Saadi's curious makeup there were various little considerate habits. But when the boys took him out for excursions he showed no consideration. He tried every man's patience to the breaking point.

Ameen was the first to act as guide. He proposed that they go up the lake front to where Halsted, disguised as Clarendon, begins. They did this on the afternoon of Saturday, October 4. Arrived at the head of the street, they dodged through the belt of motors which steadily moves along the Lake Shore Drive, and looked out over the hazy lake. Then they walked down to the car, and

stood up in the front of it beside the motorman, and Ameen pointed out things as they clanged along. District succeeded district. It was as if every nation had sent its peaceful contribution to this experiment station. After two hours they were left at Eighty-fifth Street, and walked till they reached open prairie.

Ameen selected a seat on the anticipatory wooden sidewalk, and a startled rabbit sprang out. "Bismillah!" he exclaimed softly, not at the rabbit, but as an invitation to his friend to be seated. But Saadi threw himself on the ground and plucked some of the tall sweet clover with which the prairie was redolent.

"Ameen Jan, what you will be when you go back?"

"An oculist, Saadi. And what shall you be?"

"Military surgeon. I will not stay here long."

"We shall miss you."

"What for you tell lies, Ameen Jan? I am looking up in sky, where you will never go if you tell lies."

"We shall miss you, Saadi. I shall say, Oh, Halsted, Halsted, thou garden without a rose. Or I shall see you lying as you now are, smelling those crushed leaves, and I shall remember that Saadi of Shiraz called that sweetness the breath of Issa of Galilee."

"Boro, little Ameen! Go way back and sit down. Saadi of Shiraz said, 'To pardon oppressors is to injure oppressed.' But every damn Persian licks boot of oppressor."

Ameen glanced at the sun. "It is rather late to begin a discussion. But I wish that my father were here."

"Your father is old man?"

"Yes, and few men have suffered more than he."

"Then I will not what you say lambast papa. You may tell about papa."

As he spoke, Saadi let his left hand fall, and it lay resignedly in the sweet clover, clasping a tuft of it.

"Well, Saadi, I have learned two great things from my father. And the first is that peace begins at home.

When there is no oppression in the family, there will be none in the world. Every man must do what he can to prevent war."

Saadi's hand gave a convulsive jerk that uprooted the tuft of clover. But he said nothing, and still stared into the limitless blue.

"The second thing," continued the Persian, "is that sectarian religion fomenters war, and that therefore every city ought to have a school of comparative religion, where a man may choose what fits his nature. Every man is incurably religious, but —"

Ameen stopped, for he saw that Saadi was not listening. Saadi's hand was crushing the tuft of sweet clover till it exhaled the breath of Issa, and his eyes were straining into the blue as if seeking an omen. But at the cessation of Ameen's voice, the fingers slowly relaxed, and Saadi presently turned his head.

"I am not in it with Sufi dreamer to speak pretty words. But oh, you Ameen Beg, son of gun and joy of my liver, listen here. We live in twentieth century, but it is only dawn of world, and it will be damn bloody dawn."

Ameen arose and dusted off his clothes. "Saadi, you enhance the gaiety of nations. But we must be going back, for Saturday's sun is declining."

"All right. I will get up and swear by declining sun, same as prophet in Koran. 'Oh, you declining sun! I swear that Mirza Ameen will answer Yes to Saadi's next question.'"

"Put the question."

"If damn Jew outraged your sister, would you outrage some Jewess?"

"No!"

Saadi spat on the ground. "You lie, Ameen Beg. You would do same as I will do — first chance I get."

Ameen looked at the blazing grey eyes, and answered steadily. "Saadi, I have been put to the test of non-

resistance, and I have seen it met by others. When I was a child, in Meshed, I saw Babis burned at the stake. It made me faint, and I fell from my horse. Not one of them but his family had suffered outrage. Not one of them but could have escaped by renouncing his faith. And yet they were singing in the flames, and all had given gifts to the executioners, if only a flower."

Saadi was staring, speechless, at the sublimity of Ameen's self-deception, but Ameen was thinking of Saadi's terrible threat.

"Saadi, it is written in Sura eighty-one that a Day shall come when the stars shall fall, and souls rejoin their bodies, and innocent girls shall ask why they were slain. I suppose it is not a scientific statement, but I suppose it to be in some profound sense true. You will see your little sister again, Saadi Jan, and see her divinely revenged by love."

XIII

THE fact that before Saadi's arrival there had been no discussions in the Caravansery, much less any quarrelling, was due to a happy constellation of forces. Each of the five students was a picked man, and Trench evoked each man's best. Each wanted to master the master's method and Trenchify some bit of the world. And peace was strengthened by the very differences of temperament. Ameen was peaceful because it was simply not in his nature to give pain to any living creature. Becker was peaceful on principle, having resigned himself to the tedious march of economic evolution. Wu, whose interests were strictly terrestrial, had a perfectly celestial capacity for minding his own business. Chatterjee was peaceful because nothing terrestrial was permanent enough to quarrel about. And Deland was peaceful because he was a Christian, and would have peace even if he had to fight for it.

All these types, from Trench to Deland, were new to Saadi. He reacted to them as naively as a cat reacts to a dog, or a fire to powder. But there was neither bite nor explosion.

Wu and Chatterjee were well-nigh inseparable, like earth and heaven. They and Trench were having lunch on October 7, when the doctor remarked that they might take the afternoon off, because the one professor who claimed them that afternoon had been called out of town.

Wu suggested that it would be a good time to take Saadi to the stockyards, and invited Chat to come along and see the sights. The invitation was purely formal,

for Wu was well aware that nothing would induce Chat even to glance and pass. But Chat said that he would show Saadi the region known as Back of the Yards, and deliver him later at the portal of the inferno.

Saadi fell in with the plan, and by three o'clock was inspecting the Slovak district. School was out, and Chat exhibited some scores of children in the street before a single block. The crowding of that block was beyond belief, but Chat explained how the children came to survive. It was due, he said, to the destruction of the garbage dumps. And the Augean task had been accomplished single-handed by Miss McDowell, who kept after the city for nineteen years.

"It shows what one person can do. One person can clean up a garbage dump, or some such thing."

"Well, Chat, we will make bronze statue of Miss McDowell and set up here, and it will say: 'This is woman who saved all you damn rabbits.' But I do not see what is use of rabbits —"

He was interrupted by a boy who pointed at Chat and called out, "Nigger, nigger!" The boy darted past, but he was not quick enough. Saadi had him by the collar and into an alley before any one noted what was up. The lad was perhaps fifteen years old, and made a struggle, but he was like wax in Saadi's hands. He was set against the wall, like a prisoner about to be shot.

"What is your name?"

"None of your business."

"Look into my eye."

The boy looked, and saw murder.—"My name is Gavro."

"Gavro is Gavrilo. You know what Gavrilo means?"

"No, I don't, and I don't care."

"It means Gabriel. Gabriel is angel by whom Bog speaks to men. You know Bog?"

"Yes."

"You are hell of nice angel for God to send message by! Are you hell of nice angel?"

"No."

"Say, no, sir."

"No, sir."

"You think Bog yells, 'Nigger, nigger'?"

"No, sir."

"Have you got sister?"

"Yes, sir."

"You know what some niggers do to white boys' sisters?"

"Yes, sir."

"You do not, you hell of nice angel boy."

"Yes, I do. I ain't no kindergarten kid."

"Well, Gavril, you think it makes negro nice toward your sister to call him nigger?"

"No, sir."

"Gavril, you are damn liar. You would stand still and see nigger insult your sister. Your father came over here to get away from Black Austria, but he has black coward for son. Who is little girl standing in front of alley shaking in shoes?"

"It is my sister."

"Oh! I think I will go kiss your sister."—Saadi turned away and approached the child. The boy hesitated a second, dashed after him, headed him off, and struck him in the face. An enraged boy of fifteen can strike a hard blow. Saadi reeled, got his balance, and smiled.

"That is better, Gavril. You are not black coward. May I have pleasure to speak to sister now?"

"Yes."

"Say 'Yes, Your Highness.'"

"Yes, Your Highness."

Saadi stooped and looked into the frightened face. As he spoke, his voice was softer than a summer wind.

"What is your name, little Slav woman?"

The child managed to moisten her dry lips and answer,
“Sophie, ma’am.”

“Well, is your papa’s name Ferdinand?”

“No, ma’am.”

Saadi smiled.—“Why you call me ma’am?”

“I forget. I call teacher ma’am.”—Sophie began to smile back.

“Do you like teacher?”

“When she ain’t cross.”

“Cross! Teacher is cross with little woman like you? Sophie, do you know what I will do when I am Vazee?”

“No, sir.”

“I will hang only school teachers! Here is silver dollar, dear Sophie. Go away buy big doll.”

Sophie took the dollar and looked into the grey eyes.—

“Please, sir, you said you would kiss me.”

“So I will, if brother permits.”

Gavro grinned and nodded, and Saadi touched the little forehead with his lips.

Gavro went up to Chat. “Please excuse me, mister.”

“Jak!” said Chat. “It is nothing.”

The children departed, Gavro with an arm about Sophie’s shoulders. Chat and Saadi proceeded down the street.

“Well, Chat, it is very kind to bring Saadi down here to complete his education. If I was mean, I would ask why you don’t go after India for nineteen years till she cleans up garbage dump called British Raj, or some such thing. But I won’t. I will think how I can be like Miss McDowell and do something for Bo—” Saadi stopped short.

“For what?”

“For Bokhara. It is no damn use, but I will go through motions, anyhow.”

“That remark pleases me, Mr. Sereef. Gita says that we have a right to action, but not to the fruits of action. Who can guess how far away his motions register!”

"Maybe Chat doesn't know what motions Saadi means. It was one brave man in India little while ago — he chucked bomb at viceroy in Delhi. But damfool only hit elephant. He needed Saadi to teach him motions — five, like this: One, take off coverlock; two, strike cap with lock; three, chuck lock away; four, raise arm very slow, not excited; five — throw, by golly! And throw straight. If at automobile, don't throw underneath like damfool who threw at Shah in 1908. Drop it inside — bang!"

"It is illusion," replied Chatterje, calmly. "You do not know yourself."

"Self? What is self? I am piece of nature. When I see enemy, blood vessels dilate, respiration comes quick, arm goes up,— biff! More I biff, faster burns oxygen, faster comes sugar out of liver, faster pours out adrenalin. I am not tired. I yell 'Na nosch! Na pred na nosch — give 'em bayonet!'"

"It is illusion," repeated Chat, even more calmly. "It is māyā. You can slay or starve the millions, but they are safe within the One."

"Oh, ho, Chat, I get your little system now. God is big Bokhara rug, very rich and red."

"Yes," smiled the Hindu, "and the coloured threads of our little passions only enrich the pattern of God's impersonal love. You are a part of God, but you do not know Him."

"You know him? Will you introduce me?"

"Naham manye suvedite no na vedite vedacha — I do not think I know Him well, or that I know Him, or that I know Him not."

"I thought so. Chat's exposition of acquaintance with gentleman is clear as Ganges mud. It would be better if Chat was Kali-worshipper. Bloody Kali I understand."

"I doubt it, my friend. Do you know what this day may be?"

"It is October seventh. Five years ago to-day damn Thronfolger Ferdinand annexed Bosnia."

"No! It is the happiest day of the year! It begins our Pooja, the feast of the Mother, whom you choose to call Kali. The shephâlîka blossoms have fallen, and the children have cried, 'Mother is coming!' And now she comes, and families are joyfully reunited. She is the energy of all the gods. She destroys all demons and some such things that terrify humanity. To her bosom she tenderly gathers all the slain, as some day she will gather you."

"Pooh, pooh, Pooja! Take me quick to stockyards. You bring me down here to show what one person can do, and then show me it is not necessary to do anything. All is done already. It is what Deland sings, Jesus paid it all. All distinctions of right and wrong are merged in Absolute. Bismillah! I will now go see butcher merge all distinctions of blood in absolute red."

Chatterjee was silent, withdrawing his vexed soul from the life of the senses into the central peace. In the process he walked clear across Halsted at Forty-seventh, whereas he should have stopped on the west side of the street and turned north. He would have gone on still farther east had not Saadi's quick eye analysed the situation. So, at the last, it was Saadi who guided Chat to the portal.

Wu was waiting for them. He was gazing at a window full of neat packages to which living beings had impersonally been reduced. Chat boarded the Halsted car, and Wu stepped forward — like a yellow Vergil to guide a new Dante.

The yards seemed to fascinate Saadi. He occasionally shuddered, but, gladly quaked, saw more.

They came to the man who stands like a machine all day and opens the throats of the imploring hogs that pass him. Through such a din as Herod's soldiers heard, Saadi shouted to his leader.

"Does it make you sick in stomach, Mr. Wu?"

"No. Pork is excellent food."

"Well, most things that go round and round make me tired. Every morning same old sunrise. Every morning same old bath and shave. Every afternoon same old clinic. Every dinner same old meats — animals do not give any more kinds of meats. Every day Dr. Trench fixes up same old baby. But this repetition — do you hear me, Wu? — gives me thrill in nerves."

Wu bowed, and spoke close to Saadi's ear. "On the first occasion when I had the pleasure of receiving Mr. Sereef, I suggested that repetition is the secret of success."

"I accept amendment," yelled Saadi. "Reason why this butcher butcherises so good, he is jolly old repeater. He is essence of revolution. Always revolution has revolved, but always more hogs are born. Watch history repeated now before Mr. Wu's honourable eyes. Here comes Stolypin!"

"You will not find our last emperor in the procession," said Wu, and led Saadi away from the ghastly pageant.

"It is true, but Yuan Shih-Kai will come along. Yesterday he was elected president for life, and pretty quick he will be emperor, and then he will have to join line of assassinated pigs. But to change conversation, how is starvation prospect in China?"

"Mr. Sereef, we shall never have famine after we get transportation between the valleys. When my father was a child, nine millions starved in three years. We of the republic will change all that. One good engineer can prevent the repetition of nine million deaths."

"One?"

"One."

"It is pipedream, Wu. Republic is form pipedream takes after opium joints are shut up. I am what you say inconsolable for nine millions."

Wu did not even shrug his shoulders. Like a machine he said: "They have mingled with the weather."

"That is good answer. Very damn good indeed. From fruitless pity may Allah deliver all us children of Hassan Sabah. But I am not satisfied with China."

"We exist only to please you, Mr. Sereef."

"What I mean is this, Wu. For four five thousand years China has been jolly old repeater of teacups and babies. What is result? Nine millions mingled in weather without starting drop of rain from Wu's eyes. And same eyes saw fifty girl babies thrown in one field in Yunnan. It would be better to raise all girls and breed them to soldiers, and leave fifty khaki kids in one field in Nippon. Japanese are going to lick you, Wu, because it is what you say psychological moment. Every son of gun wishes to die for Mikado, because Mikky is son of gaseous vertebrate in sky."

The imperturbable Wu replied to this lecture by taking Saadi's elbow and politely guiding him out of the building. As they waited for the Halsted car, Saadi perceived a very thin cat in the street.

"See cat? Cat appears to be one of nine million. About to-morrow cat will mingle with weather. You think cat has owner?"

"I am agnostic on that point. But in Mr. Sereef's present mood he is not bound to respect ownership. Cats are carriers of Klebs-Loeffler bacilli, but even bacilli are frequently captured in war."

"Mr. Wu, you have most levelest head of whole damn family. Look! I will take cat prisoner and name him Jaffer. I will wash cat, and feed cat, and swab out cat's mouth with listerine in honour of Lister College, and put cat on shoulder, same as Prophet in paradise."

XIV

BECKER took Saadi to one or two socialist meetings and introduced him to several men, but to no women.

For socialism in general Saadi had only contempt. "What you want, Becker? More meats in walking sepulchre? Real life is to fight with cold steel and not care one damn what is in esophagus. Only kind of socialism which is any good is in Serbia. Everybody owns nine acres, and nobody is allowed to sell. It is hardly any cities in Serbia. But Jews must get in big smoky city and lift up voice and wail like jackals."

"Nitchevo!" said Becker. "I don't care to discuss it. Socialism is the one thing that has come to stay. But what you say about Serbia is interesting. Tell me more."

"You do not read Sunday paper, Becker."

They had been walking home from Hodcarriers' Hall, Sunday evening, October 19, and had stopped in Harrison Street to have tea from a samovar.

"What was in the paper?"

"Little piece about Balkans. Yesterday Austria sent ultimatum to Serbia to yank troops out of Albania."

Becker dropped a third lump of sugar into his glass. "That means nothing to me. How did the Balkan war begin?"

"How begins anything? Everything begins with Jews. It is only thirteen millions on whole football of Shaitan, and they are more nuisance than all rest put in one bunch."

"Oye, oye! And now the insults begin."

"Suremike. I will explain. Young Turks were dreamers in Paris, all about liberty, fraternity, equality, which are damfool notions of kids. But it was no money to make revolution. Salonika was Jew town, with lots of money, but Greeks were grabbing trade. Salonik Jews and Vienna Jews gave young Turks money for revolution. Well, revolution revolved. Then Jews said, 'Shut eyes while we boycott damn Greeks.' Young Turks said, 'All right. Maybe they will give back Crete.'"

"It sounds possible," admitted Becker reluctantly. "But who was the builder of the Balkan League? Who was the one man most responsible?"

"Beck, is this what you say conspiracy? Ameen and Wu and Chat have been telling Saadi Arabian Nights about what one man can do. It is no such thing as one man, Beck. Every damn thought is stolen, and every damn finger is moved by nature, same as moon across sky. Your nice personal Jew nose is public thing as moon in sky."

"Saadi, you are a quaint proposition."

"Beck, little bit scientific commonsense is so rare in world it seems what you say quaint to idiots like you. But I will talk Halsted about Balkan League and you will not believe. Jimmy Bouchier did it."

"Who is Jimmy?"

"He is deaf Irishman. He is journalist. He wrote article on Balkans for Encyclopedia Britannica — you can read it in Jaffer's room."

"I never heard of him."

"Of course not. You will never hear of anything till it is all over and I have run off with your pocket-book. But Jimmy went to Venizelos in February of 1911, and suggested Greece, Bulgaria, Servia, and Montenegro to get together and lick Turk. Venizelos said: 'Haidee, James! Go chase self. My folks are Bulgar-eaters. It is impossible.' Jimmy said:

'Nothing is impossible with Shaitan. I will come back when May blooms on Pelion, and you will say yes.' So he went back in May and they walked up mountain, and came down with Balkan League under hats. Then Jimmy got Bulgaria ready, and Serbia ready. Montenegro was ready anyhow. Nikolas cannot eat breakfast till he has taken shot at somebody."

"An Irishman, eh? And deaf! Maybe you can do as much for Bokhara some day. I see you getting Bokhara and Khiva and Afghanistan together to swat Russia with a Central Asian league."

"Why you leave out Persia?" grinned Saadi.

"I did not mean to. It was an oversight. But tell me more about your own share in the Balkan game. You came away before the second war, didn't you?"

"Yes, in March. You see, it was fifth year in medicine, but I lost October and November. On December third came armistice, and Savoff and Nazim hugged each and drank champagne with each, and I said war is over. So I went back to make up work. But no professor would help Saudi little bit. All were mad because he went to help Serbia. It was awful days in Vienna. It was no Christmas trade, and every day Jew paper *Neue Freie Presse* had bankrupt notices. I began to be watched."

Becker gave a wink, and listened for revelations which did not come.

"All winter I expected Austria would jump on Serbia, and Russia would jump on Austria. I thought so in January when Nazim was shot because it was known he would surrender Adrianople. I thought so in February when war began again. I thought so in March when I gave up bad job and started for New York to go out west young man and grow up with country. When I got in New York, King George had been shot and Adrianople had been gobbled. I said, Austria will sure jump now. Then Nikolas took Sku-

tari, and warships of powers made fool blockade off shore, and old Nik lay on cliff on belly with spyglass and laughed till sick. But at last he let powers have Skutari, to save peace of whole world."

"Grey was some help, wasn't he?"

“ Suremike. Well, I have been waiting still for war to begin. In May, boys in Bosnia were so anxious to bust loose from Austria that whole country had to be chucked into state of siege. Bosnia is still in state of siege. In June Mahmud Shevket was shot in automobile because he let go of Adrianople. For Mahmud twelve boys were hanged. They were buried on June 28, day when Bulgaria jumped on Servia. Black Austria told her to jump, but Black Austria had Servian surprise party coming. Bulgaria got awful licking. Becker, when you hear about only Turks raping and mutilating, you can say it is damn lie. What Christians did to Christians this summer — it is no words — Dr. Trench says I must not try to tell such.”

"I believe you, Saadi, but I thought you preferred war to peace."

Saadi sighed heavily. "It can be what you say too much of one good thing. It is not sin to wear buttons, but it is crime to wear nothing but buttons."

"Oye, oye! You are just whistling to keep your courage up."

"It is good word, Becker. I will remember. I need to whistle all time, same as peanut-roaster."

"Well," laughed Becker, "I have my grouch against Nicky, but he will keep the peace. A man wrote me from Moscow that when the Panslavists made a demonstration after Adrianople, the Cossacks stopped it with the lash. The Tsar does not want war."

"It may be, Becker," said Saadi, dreamily. "I will not know unless I go to Petersburg, where it is big strike coming soon. I would give ten rubles to know, and maybe I would give five. But I would depend

on size. If they were small, like little devils Dr. Trench was telling, maybe I would give six. What you think about those chlamydozoa? You think they are microbes? They go through all filters. What you think?"

"I think you are trying to ditch me, Saadi. But there is another good reason for not fearing war. The Crown Prince of Austria will prevent it. He married a Slav. He loves the Slavs."

Saadi was smilingly inspecting the sugary bottom of his glass. "I love my cat and my cat loves me, I feed my cat on green bay tree, my little cat goes mew, mew. It is song Deland sings. You should pay me visit, Becker, and get acquainted with my cat. My cat is named Jaffer. Of course he will be fatter sometime — what Deland says 'some sweet day by and by.' I love to hear Deland sing on mandolin. It is like old blind men in Servia making music on guzla. But Deland is not blind. He made picture of me and my cat."

"Ditched again, Saadi! What has your cat to do with the Crown Prince of Austria?"

"Becker, you are Nick Carter, price ten cents with coloured picture on front. My cat loves Slavs. My cat goes down in cellar and makes love to Slavs."

"Be serious, Saadi. Franz Ferdinand is not only a Slavophil, but he hates the Kaiser."

"Suremike. That is why Willie is so sorry his oldest kid did not behave like gentleman at table of Franz Ferdinand's duchess. That is why Willie is telling all Berlin what nice wife Ferdy has got, and how nice empress she would make, by golly, no matter how much Magyars hate her and Ferdy too. Also it is why Willie goes to visit Ferdy in Konopischt. Next time he will take Tirpitz with him. Behold whole damn Teutonic bunch in Ferdy's rose garden, singing *M'r san M'r*, We are Us!"

"You seem to know a lot about it."

"Suremike. I do not read newspapers — that is why I know so much. What I know about Ferdy is first-hand, same as Chat's acquaintance with God Almighty. I will now say 'Piddle!' like girl I met. We must go home, Beckerovitch. Doctor will lambast me for not to know composition of breast milk. You suppose Sophie and Maximilian and Ernest were brought up on bottle?"

"What?"

"Nothing, Becker. I am talking in sleep about clinic."

"Saadi, I'm a proletarian Jew and you're a Moslem noble, but you needn't walk on me."

Saadi's manner changed. "Becker, if you ever again accuse me to have race feeling, I will what you say knock block off. I will give you proof I respect you."

Becker waited.

Saadi set down his glass and gazed at it, while sadness stole into his eyes.

"On ninth day of August — day before Bukarest treaty was signed — Vienna privately informed Rome and Berlin that she would move against Servia very soon."

"How do you know that?"

"Becker, if I tell you it is sign of Jew to ask one question too much, you must not blame me with to be Moslem noble."

Becker flushed. "I withdraw the question."

"Of course you withdraw. And it is pleasure to tell one more thing. Rome has refused to back Vienna."

XV

It is clear from the preceding narrative that Saadi reacted in much the same way to all the boys of foreign birth. But with Deland he was different.

Deland had taken him to several of the small parks, and these filled him with delight. He loved to see young creatures at play, loved to see their freedom, loved the games which gave them discipline without their knowing it. "We will yet have some soldiers in Halsted," he cried.

They were returning late one afternoon from a small park when Saadi suddenly stopped.

"What for are dagoes coming out of church? It is not Sunday."

"Hello," said Deland, "we're right in little Sicily, and I'll bet it's the funeral of the two brothers that the sawed-off shot-gun got. Wait till I ask the cop."

He loped off across the street, and Saadi saw the officer nod.

"Come on in," said Deland, returning. "I never saw a Catholic funeral."

"St. Vitus was Sicilian," said Saadi irrelevantly, "but the Prussians have his bones at Corvey."

"What?"

"Nothing. I was just wondering if it would be expensive funeral."

"Well, let's just slip in and see how things look."

They advanced along the edge of the crowd, up the side of the steps, and into the church. No Sicilian paid the slightest attention to them. All the passionate, dark faces were preoccupied, all the voluble tongues

silent. Every brain had but one thought — who would be the next?

Passing through the vestibule, the boys pushed through the leathern doors, which swung behind them like a bat's wings coming to rest. Darkness met them — but it was the darkness of a starry night.

In the distance were tall candles — and beyond them the lights of the altar. Fifty tall candles, rising as high as a man's head from candelabra as high as a man's waist. Fifty tall candles, forming a hollow square of tardy defence. And there within the ineffectual fortress rose two high, architectural shadows, along the lines of which the unearthly radiance glinted.

Deland left the shadow of a pillar and led Saadi to a pew, standing aside to let him enter. Saadi knelt, folded his arms on the oaken rail, and gazed. There were still a few persons in the church — perhaps presently the coffins would be taken out — in the front pews mourners were kneeling, three children among them.

Ten minutes went by. "Come on," whispered Deland. But Saadi did not hear him. Deland rose and tiptoed out. At last Saadi appeared, and they descended into the street.

"Sorry to disturb you, old man, but I've got three things to do. I've got my supper to get, and a prayer-meeting to attend, and the blood vessels of the neck to grind."

He led the way to a restaurant, and ordered spaghetti for two.

"Vino!" added Saadi.

"Thought you didn't drink."

"I have never drunk glass of wine in whole life. But now I will drink."

Beyond this remark, Saadi said nothing during the whole meal. He did not touch his spaghetti, but tasted the wine, made a wry face, and fell to consuming cigarettes.

"Well, old man, I don't wonder the funeral took away your appetite. The worst thing was those poor children in the front pew."

Saadi turned a dreamy eye. "Do you know names of children?"

"I don't remember, though I saw them in the paper."

"I can guess names: Sophia, Massimiliano, Ernesto."

"Perhaps. People ought to remember that they have names, and aren't just orphans in the bunch. Their dads put up as good a fight as they could."

"Bog dal srecu yonacku."

"Go easy, old man. Say your little piece in United States."

"It is Bokharan, Deland. It says that their dads were brave and lucky."

"Gee! I'm glad you think they've gone to heaven. But it must be hard for their families to feel like Christians."

Saadi ignored the reference to heaven. "Deland, I asked doctor is he Christian."

"Is that right? Did you have the nerve? What did he say?"

"I will not tell you, because I do not know what is Christian. I know what is Orthodox, and Roman, and Uniate, and Bogumil, and what you say fifty-seven varieties, but I wish to know what is Christian without varieties. You tell poor Saadi."

"What do you take me for, old man? a theological professor?" Deland coughed, and fanned away some of the smoke which, steadily pouring from Saadi's cigarette, drifted away with difficulty, like sectarian fancies. Then he proceeded. "You can go to prayer-meeting with me, if you like."

Saadi looked doubtful. "Has real Christian different prayer from all varieties?"

"In my church we have no forms at all."

"I do not understand. In Moslem prayer-meeting all pray together at one time. So it is in Orthodox and Roman. Maybe you are like Bogumils."

"You can search me, Saadi. But I promised my mother that I would always go."

Saadi laid aside his cigarette. "Your mother is alive?"

"No, old man. It's all I can do to please her now."

Saadi laid his hand on Deland's in silent sympathy. Then he sighed, beckoned the waiter, and paid the bill. Deland tried to prevent him, but Saadi caught his wrist and held it as in a band of steel.

They took to the cars and went to prayer-meeting. Saadi listened respectfully to it all, and after meeting they walked in silence to Halsted Street.

Deland settled down to his neglected work, and ground steadily till eleven o'clock. Then he laid aside his tasks, read a favourite chapter in the Book, and dropped on his knees. As he prayed — silently using a blend of Elizabethan archaisms and Halsted vulgarisms — it crossed his mind that he was not doing his whole duty. Might not the grace of God have touched the heart of this strange wandering child? He would tiptoe to Jaffer's room, and see if Saadi had gone to bed.

He found a pencil of light emerging from the key-hole, and knocked softly. No answer. Evidently Saadi had left the light burning. He would go in and switch it off.

He opened the door. The room was blue with tobacco smoke, but there by Jaffer's couch knelt Saadi Sereef. Deland's heart gave a great leap of joy.

Saadi arose, and Deland apologised.

"It is all right, Deland. I am finished with bad job."

"Don't say so, old man. It was no bad job to get down on your marrow bones and thank God you're

alive, and ask him to overlook a few things and make a doctor out of you."

Saadi spoke with measured utterance. "I prayed, Deland. I hunted for person I heard about in Deland's Bogumil prayer-meeting. He was missing. He was absent on leave. He was gone to visit ghosts and vampires."

"Old man! My dear old man, you are plumb wrong about it. He is here, Saadi. He's the whole thing, and all there is. Don't chuck it, Saadi. Hold on! Get a grip on Him!"

Saadi shook his head.

Deland collapsed into Jaffer's arm chair. "Oh, gee! I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry I don't see how I can stand it. Say — this is too much for a chucklehead to figure out, but I'm dead sure that you wouldn't try so hard unless you had already got there. I don't know how to say it."

"Bedouin said it long ago, before Pascal or Deland. If thou has sought Me, thou hast already found Me. But it is not true."

"I'll give you the Book. I'll show you the places in it. It would be the best that ever happened if you could go back as a Christian doctor to poor old Bokhara. What I know about your country could be put in a two-ounce bottle, but if Bokhara is anything like America, it needs Jesus Christ, and needs him bad."

"It may need Issa, my good Yankee boy, or it may not. All it will get is fire and sword."

Deland saw he was making no headway. "You called our prayer-meeting Bogumil. What does that mean?"

"It is name of dead Christian sect. Bogumils said world is so bad nobody ought to have any kids. Good many didn't get married. But then Catholics jumped on them, and they had to get kids to fight back. Bogu-

mils believed there is big scrap on between Bog and Shaitan — god and devil.”

“Then they were dead right, Saadi. I’m glad we struck you that way. ‘Onward Christian Soldiers’ is some song.”

“I liked it, Deland. But I liked other songs better.”

“What ones?”

“One that said that I’m pilgrim, I’m stranger, I can tarry, I can tarry but one night. Also they sang about ninety and nine. I understood. Men are sheep. I am sheep. I am one that is off on hills astray.”

Tears sprang to Deland’s eyes. “For cramp’s sake, old man, can’t you hear the Voice that is calling you? I’m not much on the gentle shepherd racket, but when a sheep is lost, why, he’s lost. Jesus is mighty to save, but you’ve got to repent. You’re a lost sheep, Saadi, and you’ve got to bleat a little, so that he will know where you are.”

“I cannot repent, Deland. I am liar and thief and man with sawed-off shotgun. I know about sheep. I have been with shepherds in night on hills. I have sat by fire and heard of ghosts and vampires and paradise — where no Christian can go. But what I most know about sheep is this. It must be big wolf-dogs.”

Saadi was still standing, stroking the purring creature that he had rescued from starvation. His eyes were sad, but very calm, and Deland saw that the battle was lost. The man from Salem arose.

“Shall I make Deland little cup of Bokhara coffee with copper toy I bought of Greek?”

“No, old man, it would only keep us awake.”

“Not me, Deland. I would like to do something for Deland.”

“The only thing you can do for me is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. And I think you

will. I think the time will come when you will feel Him closer than your carotid artery."

The cat nestled on Saadi's shoulder, and Saadi held it against his neck. "You ask me to believe in Bog, and I have to say no. Always it will be so — my last word will be No."

XVI

EDITH found her new studies confining. There was no more revelry in the riches of the sand dunes, where the fringed gentian hides its glory. Invertebrates and embryos, microscope and microtome — such was the new order of the day. But she often dreamed back to her botany.

God's love had spoken to her in the plants. The very breath she drew was sweetened for her by the leaves; girl and tree live by exchanging breath; you cannot feed lovers so. And what fair thought had she ever known but it grew fairer in the presence of flowers? She was wont to read the very skies in terms of a blossomy spectrum — violet, dahlia, hepatica, forget-me-not, larkspur, crocus, poppy, rose.

When God's sunshine reached earth, love sprang to meet love. Into the thin leaves the earth sent up three elements, and His red and blue rays transformed them into food. Then, by admitting the stream of nitrogen, He transformed the leaf-sugar into living tissue, and at last into bodies like her own. The elements of her body would some day rejoin the circling streams, but she who followed His art could never die.

It was Trench who had unconsciously made her feel the sacredness of all this. And now what was suddenly happening to her under his conscious influence? He had talked about looking at things impersonally. Well, she had always so looked at food; she had never eaten her bread with tears because it was the defeated offspring of wheat-plants; but now even bread began to taste of blood. And now she could not look at living

plants without recognising the terrible overcrowding. Death among plants, from the heartless oak to the hooked liana, was a systematic asphyxiation of infants.

When she turned to the insects, she could no longer rejoice in the little marriage-priestlings of the flowers. Once she had thought how wisely their unseen Bishop had assigned them — butterflies for the red, bees for the blue, moths for the white. But this was fancy; this was nature-faking. Trench would explain all that fertilisation in terms of equations. But when you got down to scientific bed rock, there was no language left. There wasn't a verb along that path, and the result was that instead of regarding the flower-marriages in noble Ruskinian fashion, she now regarded them ignobly. Elsie, for instance, was a passionate red flower, and any passing butterfly like Edith might irritate her into unhallowed union with the nearest reckless red.

So much for the insects that live on nectar. Looking now at the rest of the two million species, she saw them as assassins. Their instinctive methods were diabolically ingenious and cruel. They presented a closed system of hunger, assassination, and rape.

Nor was it only the male that was inexorably and innocently hungry. The female scorpion and mantis eat the whole of their mates, during or after pairing. Even the cricket mutilates her mate. No wonder that Trench had evaded the discussion of crickets on the hearth.

She began to understand him. He regarded life as a unit, from bees to priests, and flowers to girls, and crickets to matrons. And it was to avoid becoming an utter misanthrope that he called it fate or machinery. But if she ever came to such a conclusion, life would not be worth living. That kind of view would paralyse her will. It would make all effort a farce.

The case was no better when she came to study the sea-animals. From the barely visible slipper-animal-

cule to the shark, it was an unrelieved system of assassination. And the formula of sea-water was nearly that of her own blood. She was the descendant of these assassins — before birth her neck had actually shown traces of gills. Of course in theory it made no difference who her ancestors were, if she had attained decency. But how could she be sure? She had a maw like the rest, and she liked small oysters alive. Was her spiritual life but a self-deceptive egotism? Was her anxiety over Bobbie merely nature's way of providing a future defender of her appetite for expensive shell-fish?

"Nature" distributed claws and teeth and protective devices quite impersonally, and left the rest to chance. As things had worked out, the heavy-armoured trilobites were a failure, as heavy-armoured vessels might prove to be, in the war Trench thought so close at hand. The alert and active destroyers had inherited the earth. The especially triumphant tribes were three: the cricket-tribe, the bacteria, and man. Well, people didn't worry about it. Preachers assured their audiences that Darwin was a back number.

How hard her heart was becoming. But she had not come to the university to harden her heart. Whatever God was, she must trust Him. Had He not guided Dr. Trench's hand to the saving of Bobbie's life? Yes — though now it was piteously necessary to look more closely into the process of that salvation. Bobbie had been saved from the membrane in his throat. And the membrane was only a bed of foliage; the poison was a secretion of little stems. The diphtheretic bacillus was merely a colourless plant with a vicarious method of blooming. It turned a rosy cheek to violet, and a carnation lip to iris, and triumphed at last in one great heavy white blossom. If God made that plant, Dr. Trench had saved Bobbie from God. But perhaps God was not a physical cause at all. Perhaps he was like

heaven or Elijah — yet to come. She felt a bitter sense of the ludicrous.

Plunged in her new troubles, she saw but little of her new friends. But when Elsie's summaries of Westermarck suddenly ceased, she decided to go and ask why. On a crisp Sunday afternoon in the middle of December she was starting out for this purpose when Clara Narcisco came round the corner.

"Giorno, madonna mia! It feels good to little Clara, this nice coat that Edith said was too small for her — and Edith had better go to confession for telling a whopper. Invite me in to your palazzo, si piaca."

"Clara Narcisco, the colour on your cheeks is too rich for words. I'm going to kiss them so hard that I'll leave a white spot on both of them. There! Come in out of the cold."

When they were snug in Edith's room, before the glowing grate, Clara began:

"Madonna mia, I'm worried sick."

"You're a good friend, Clara, and here you are. Is it your father?"

"No, it's Elsie. Last night I had a call from her mother. Just think of it — that poor old Sheeny coming to see a Catholic girl, and hardly able to speak two words. I don't know which she thought was worse, the plaster shrine with the bambino, or the newspapers I had down to keep the floor clean, or me alone with two kids. I was putting Maria to bed, and Maria didn't want to go to bed when she saw Mrs. Shaviro; she wanted to run away. Mrs. Shaviro has the biggest black eyes you ever saw."

"I've seen her. What did she want?"

"She wanted to know if I knew where Elsie was. She had to tell there was a heavy scrap at home. Mrs. Shaviro was talking to Elsie about never going to church. She called it School, or something like that. Aloro, Elsie got mad and said she would lead her own

life, and she just packed up and beat it. Wasn't that fierce?"

Edith reflected. "It was fierce — certainly. But I don't understand. I can't see her getting angry about nothing."

"Well, I've heard her call the sheeny prayers nonsense. But I ain't through yet. I says, 'Mrs. Shaviro,' I says, 'why don't you send one of the boys to follow Elsie and see where she's living, and Mrs. Shaviro says she done it and Elsie give the kid the go-by. Then she asked me to find out, and I said I would, and was going to talk to Elsie about it, and ecco! Elsie don't show up at the shop."

"She may be sick."

"She ain't sick. I went straight to Ischl."

"That was right. You and I have the same idea."

"I'll bet we have. I says, 'Mr. Ischl, why ain't Elsie Shaviro here? Have you been saying something to her that makes her feel insulted?' He takes something out of a pigeonhole and shoves it over to me and it was two weeks old and in it she says she appreciates the fair way Ischl has treated the shop, but she is going to quit after two weeks because she is not going to work any more in a factory and she is giving him notice."

"Clara, this is serious. What do you make of it?"

"Cosi Iddio mi aiuti! I ain't got no more idea than you have. This last two or three weeks she was the happiest I ever seen her, and now it's just like she was killed by a street car."

"Clara, did you ever know of any other girl's disappearing this way?"

"Oh, yes. But it don't seem possible Elsie has gone wrong."

"Don't good girls ever take rooms for themselves, so as to avoid mothers that don't understand them?"

"It may be. I shouldn't wonder if there was girls

that had the nerve to do that, but oh, dear — that don't help us none. I wish I could just forget it."

"We can't, Clara! Did she ever go with anybody, so far as you know?"

Clara shook her head.

"Well, Clara dear, there is only one thing I can think of to do. There are plenty of young socialists in the university, and to-morrow I will find out what girl among them is most worthy of our confidence. And I will tell that girl what our trouble is, and ask her to keep a quiet lookout."

"I knew you would know the answer."

"Let's not be too sure, Clara, but we three girls must stick together. And we won't think evil of her."

XVII

SUCH was the interruption of Edith's studies in December. She did as she had promised Clara, and easily found a sympathetic ally, who agreed to inquire casually about Elsie. Edith did more. She went to Hull-House, and laid the case before a woman who knew the young idealists of the West Side well. This lady also sent out casual inquiries, and sent them with system. The casual inquiring went on for two weeks, but with no results. It did, to be sure, reveal the fact that at least twenty acquaintances of Elsie Shaviro were wondering what had become of her. She had taken part in the work of a certain local, and her vivid personality was one to be missed.

Christmas came, and the Narciscos spent it with the Drummonds. Edith and Clara did not speak of Elsie, but they both felt the hovering of a shadow above the merry-making. When Edith had deposited the sleepy children and their motherly sister at the Narcisco rooms, and carried up dolls and Noah's arks and Christmas mangers and a whole railway system, the two friends parted rather sadly.

During the holiday vacation Edith got into the habit of walking in places which she had never before visited. Her steps turned to regions where flimsy apartment buildings had sprung up like mushrooms — plants of saprophytic origin, able to explode their way through building laws. Often she would step into a vestibule and scan the names under the row of speaking tubes. But she never found Elsie's name among them.

Fear is a great breeder of convictions, and Edith

gradually made up her mind that Elsie had done what she had threatened to do. Elsie — she felt sure of it at last — had now a paramour. The right man had come along. He might be a man unhappily married, but with money enough to support a mistress. Or he might be some struggling young unmarried socialist.

In either case, Edith's venture in philanthropy had come to grief. This was the result of setting herself up to instruct a brilliant physician.

Apparently it was the end of something. What did it matter whether life was photochemistry or divine handicraft? The laws of it were rigid, and it did not help to call them spiritual. In Elsie's case the mating instinct had got the better of commonsense. Did it help matters to call the mating instinct human and commonsense divine?

She knew very well what Elsie would do if brought to account. She would quote her Westermarck. The Wahabics regard smoking as a mortal sin, adultery as a trivial one. Albanians feel that shooting a husband is nothing as compared with eating an egg on Saturday, and Osage Indians declare that an illegitimate is not a person. In short, Elsie would say that morality is only custom, and often silly custom.

All of which would be Elsie's afterthought. The mating instinct had swept through her as something imperceptible to human senses sweeps through insects and brings them to each other across miles of perfumed air. But once irretrievably mated, she would find excuses to quiet her conscience. If now Edith were to consult Dr. Trench, he would say, "You are beginning to see things without prejudice. If Elsie's child dies, she will revert to the faith of her fathers and say that it has gone to heaven."

She felt a great need of blaming Elsie, but in the light of her recent studies she was tempted to regard her as an animal pure and simple. That passionate

dark-eyed creature was once a single cell, and the chromosomes of it had settled her conduct from the moment of its fertilisation. This was fatalism, but Edith was on the point of accepting it, all for love of Elsie. How different from her first study of chromosomes, when she had rejoiced that Easter lilies have the same number as Easter brides. How different from her former assurance that chromosomes assure progress, because they refuse to transmit bad traits produced by bad surroundings.

Was it so terribly easy, then, to be warped by personal feeling from the scientific attitude? She would not yield without a struggle. How hard she tried in the next weeks to face the facts and live down her sense of helplessness. How earnestly she prayed to be delivered from the power of metaphor.

She had been as good a reader of the daily paper as the average woman, but now she did not open it. In January she did not know that German officers were acquitted of abusing civilians in Alsatia. In February she did not know that William of Wied accepted the throne of Albania, or that Mr. Carnegie gave two millions to the Church Peace Union, or that the Senate ratified treaties of arbitration with eight nations.

Nor was there any news from God. Every hour in the laboratory seemed to be closing the fetters about her. Under the microscope she found life all of one texture. Cells divided and sub-divided, death and life going hand in hand, neither quite distinguishable from the other. She saw the terrestrial web of life renewing itself automatically. It would continue to do so until a lowering temperature or a whiff of starry gas should end it.

XVIII

GOOD FRIDAY came, and with it the car to bring Edith home. As she was whirled through the park-ways toward the West Side, she felt very unready. Easter had always been a great day in the family, and now she was reluctant to meet it.

Finally she directed the chauffeur to take her to Hull-House in Halsted Street, and leave her there, and explain to Mrs. Drummond that she would be home in time for dinner at seven.

As the car drove away, Edith stood at the corner of Polk and Halsted and looked at the scene. Her thought had been to enter the settlement and inquire of her friend for any news of Elsie. But there was no use in doing this, and at that instant she was willing to let Elsie go. An animal must have its fling.

She boarded a street car and went north. She passed Trench's house, and longed to see him. How beautiful his lips were. How endearing that little twist of rough hair at the top of his forehead.

She left the car at Division Street and turned her steps westward across the bridges and the smoky mysteries of Goose Island. This was Chicago — and Mr. Kipling had declared that he knew a wretched cross-roads in India which was a better place to live in! She walked west and then south again, coming down through the great Polish district to little Sicily.

Near a church — it was the same which Saadi and Deland had visited — shops were selling religious gear. A little girl who reminded her of Clara's sister darted into her father's shop and came out with a crucifix,

which she offered for sale. For little Maria's sake Edith bought it.

Then she looked at the church. She had done no thinking during her long walk. Perhaps she had better go in and rest.

She found the interior very dark. She could see a few lonely worshippers, but where was the altar? There was no ruby gleam from the shrine, and no towering mystery such as had enthralled her in European churches. With a shock she perceived that the altar had disappeared, and that in its place was the tomb of Christ. She beheld the domelike roof of the rock-cut sepulchre; and there beneath, lighted by the pale reflection of candles, was the ashen body of the Son of Man.

For a moment she stood breathless. Then she reasoned it out. A great painting had been stretched over the altar. Rome did not stop at mere poetry. Yonder knelt Sicilian pagans gazing at Adonis in his grave, as they had knelt long before Jesus lived.

She sank into a pew, unconsciously holding the crucifix against her breast. She leaned forward against the rail of the next pew, and gazed at the apparition, as Saadi had gazed at the two coffins.

What was the world of her studies? It was a closed system of environment and response. The same energies within the body as without, so that on close analysis the body disappeared in the general atomic tissue of the universe. The same general structure for each organism, from lily to bride. And to produce a lily or a bride, the same number of tyrannical chromosomes in the impregnated cell. The lily was supposed to be an unconscious creature, the bride a conscious. But the researches of Bose showed them doing much the same things, and though the morning stirred the bride to a sense of being a bride, it never showed her the inexorable chemical processes within her body. And in all

scientific probability, the death of lily or bride was merely so much dissipation of energy.

If a spirit returned to animate that ashen, immobile mass of dead cells yonder, why, the pattern of every cell that ever lived would return. The case had only to be stated to be seen absurd. There had been no resurrection of the cell, and therefore none of the body. And if the resurrection of the "spirit" was true, biologists must believe exactly as savages believe. Ghostly birds of paradise were restlessly walking in asphodel meadows, unable to mate, and therefore refusing food — the ghostly psyches of butterflies.

It was all derisible nonsense. The simple fact was that birds of paradise were mottled by the earth they grew on, and carried their human origin on every feather. So-called spirits of the dead were indeed half angel and half bird, and all a wonder and a wild desire. These things were merely secondary sex-traits made to float away from the organs that generated them, and fancied to exist in a limbo of their own. In such bodiless creations ecstasy is very cunning.

The pale cell-colony in the distance had its structure like the rest. The jaw had fallen, and no longer crunched the flesh of other animals. It was dead for good and all. But self-deceiving hominidæ had used it to serve their own desire for survival. They had taken the grave-clothes of this Jewish specimen and flung them over the whole earth, an enchanted veil of false hope. The mechanism of desire had manufactured the risen Christ.

So she had come at last to Dr. Trench's position. She would never be able to win him to the fairy tale of immortality. She would never be able to win him — she paused at the words, and something struggled into consciousness. She loved him!

The thrill of it led her automatically to the next step. If she admitted his point of view, might not she

win him for herself? And if they had a child, let it take its chances like the rest. Let it take its chances! Let it be content with such brief joy and passion as earth could afford. She would drink deep of this sweet cup, and then sleep forever. She believed she could win him — she gave new meaning to the trembling of the hand which once had lifted her own nearly to his lips.

For a minute she dreamed. She saw the twenty-eighth of June approach, and herself awaiting him in the conservatory. She saw the feathery moss of the orchids' bed, where pink-veined bosoms lay revealed. "Yes," she would say, "they are but mechanisms, and do not know their own love." And she could hear him reply as she wished him to reply, "But, dearest, do we not know ours?"

Then the reaction set in. She scanned her conclusion. It was free from superstition, but was it free from stain? Suppose that Trench did come in June, though still determined not to marry; suppose he did lose his self-control — for her words would lead him as the lines of colour on the cypripedium lead the insect to the stigma. How much would their conduct differ from that of two uneducated persons whose excuse was that they couldn't help it? How much would it differ from Elsie's running off with a married man?

The reaction grew sharper. They were taking her Saviour from her, and she knew not where they had laid him. God help her! What thoughts had she entertained? Men had idealised that man in the tomb, but in doing so they had thought nobly of man. In the pathos of their desire to be freed from the remora of desire, they had shown confidence at least in Him. He had been tempted without sin. They had called him the Prince of Peace, because he had mastered the passions which are the cause of war. Though he had felt the blind chemical urge of hunger and anger and

love, even as the machine called the scorpion feels it, he had shown men how to control and refine their instincts. Whole races had been less beastly for thinking of Him. These things she long had known, and yet she had been on the point of tempting impersonal passion.

She had read in books of the "necessity" of love. She had read of lovers who spoke of something stronger than they. But in the name of the Prince of Peace, was there no necessity still stronger? She pressed fiercely against the oaken rail, and the crucifix hurt her breast. The pain felt good. It was as if she were a mother, and her baby were hurting her. There welled up within her an overwhelming pity for the mothers of millions untimely slain — and she knew once for all that she could never abandon the hope of heaven for mothers and children.

Thus her faith returned on the wings of a single moral decision, and as the price of giving up the man she loved. Whether God or chemistry had compelled her made no difference.

XIX

ALL the next day she kept testing herself to see if that decision was final. By evening she was satisfied that she had found the deeper necessity. And now what could she do for the girl she had lost, and the man she had given up? There must be active and disinterested sympathy for both.

As for Elsie, she must find her before she could stand by her. And when she had found her, she must show an interest in Westermarck on marriage, and no fear of Marie Sukloff. A personal in the newspapers would be the simplest method, but this had not occurred to her while she had been bewailing scorpions and crickets. That evening she wrote out a personal:

Elsie.—Simply must resume Westermarck. Not afraid of Marie or anybody like her.—Edith.

As for Trench, Elsie's words about the socialists came to her aid. Socialists were trying to make earth a reasonable sort of heaven. Their disbelief in a future life helped them to work at this task not less cheerfully, but more cheerfully. Doubtless many a scientific man was working in exactly that way. She must grasp this point of view at its best, and present it to Trench on the twenty-eighth of June, instead of quarrelling about a hopelessly technical problem. Incidentally she must read some current history, and try to dispel his absurd fear of an impending war. The days of great wars were over.

Easter morning dawned glorious, and she thanked God for it. The Easter after her mother had died

had been so raw and rainy that it was no fit symbol of the resurrection, and good dry bones would have preferred to stay underground. But this morning, this twelfth of April, 1914, was everything that it should be. She could reflect calmly that she was not anxious about her new clothes, though she had some, and no longer worried to death about her soul.

At breakfast she found by her place a glorious lily with a blurred card — "From Clara to her best friend, and I got one for Elsie, too."

Bless her heart — that good red little heart, to which no theory of physiology could ever do justice! An idea! Edith would add that message to the personal. She did so, after breakfast, and when later in the day her druggist telephoned the personal to four papers, it read:

Elsie.— Simply must resume Westermarck. Not afraid of Marie or anybody like her. And Clara has a lily for you.— Edith.

At half-past ten the whole family descended from the car and entered the church. It was an old building, rich with autumnal glass. It was a church of gentlemen for gentlemen, as Cardinal Newman would ironically have said, but social problems were not bothering Edith Bridgman this morning.

At the opening of the service, Guilmant's "Marche Funebre et Chant Seraphique" was played, and she yielded gladly to its spell. "The rest may reason and welcome; 'tis we musicians know," she quoted to herself, and wondered if Trench ever heard any music. She laid a plot to get him to the concerts of the Symphony Society.

She had come intending to get a good deal out of the sermon, but she heard nothing after the first words of the exegesis. "We shall be changed, in a moment" — and the Greek for moment was the Greek for atom.

Instantly she recalled Trench's contemptuous designation of himself. She would take him at his word for a few atomic moments and note the result.

Flowers and preacher vanished. Light-years rolled back. Out of nothing but unguessed energy arose innumerable centres of it — ethereal but ponderable. They combined, but not by impersonal passion or personal command. They melted into two great drifts of stars and nebulae. One of the whirling spirals spun till its core shone independent, and the rings condensed into eight planets. She watched the third from the centre as it whirled and grew. Planetesimals fell into it with flash and shock, and at last it held the atoms which would some day be Trench and his students, and Elsie and Clara and Edith. Then it gave off gases which formed an atmosphere, a great delicate bubble rippling with storms. This in turn distilled water, which spread like dew on a grape. The ever revolving flash of sun against the earth had power at last to gather from lithosphere, atmosphere, and hydrosphere the elements of a third sphere, the film of life. It pulsed faintly opalescent. It was green, with flecks of red, and tiny white scars. Every millimetre of that tissue bore some wound from which it had recovered. If now she shut out the green and heightened the aurora-red to carmine, she could see all the blood. To her it seemed a ruby, and for her it obliterated the scars triumphantly, as the blood of the Lamb obliterates sin. But Trench was bound not to object if that rich, meaningless, unvalued stuff was bought and sold. He was bound not to flinch as he saw the currents pass from body to body by agonised birth or pitiless crunching of teeth. And the teeth and bones were calcium, caught up from the rock to support the flesh tints of the bubble. But the hot life pulsed and shook, and the calcium fell like snow. Life clung to the rock, depositing death at every pore. It damascened smooth surfaces with fos-

sils, it floored the sea with chalk and limestone and marble. It fell on fields of battle from pole to pole. Had these bones cost no more to the breeding than to imperl a rifle ball?

Trench would answer no. But how could he live by such a view? No man could hold the impersonal focus steady — she herself had felt her eye-muscles shorten and lengthen as her human interest inevitably drew some spot of the picture nearer. And if Trench really insisted that the only reality was atomic energy, he would face a blank field in which there were only equations, mass having vanished like Shelley's skylark, lost in the light of heaven. Of such a universe he could say nothing, and yet he was doomed to express himself in the system of faded mythology which goes by the name of the English language.

What was more, he was in that web of life to stay. If he thought he could lessen the pain of it by leaving no child, he was just plain stupid. The minute his calcium fell, the sunlight would laugh at him, pick up his atoms, and put him back into the web. He would begin as plant food, but presently he would be back in human bodies.

She couldn't tell him so, but she could tell him that he was fated to stand as he stood, touching the web with steel or medicine, to make it rosier. If — when he banished pallor with oxygen, or with tincture of fern flicked out canker from the roseleaf tissue, or with a moonlight trace of silver brushed a foul film from a baby's eye — he could not see that it was worth while, he must at least see that it was fated. He was himself a part of the web, and every red cell that emerged from the marrowy caverns of his bones was literally breathing, and almost as literally breathing hope.

She could not leave the vision till she had drawn him closer and analysed him. She did so, dissolving him into a dozen impersonal Trenches — muscular, ar-

terial, lymphatic, boney. But she could not find his very self, even in his nerves — that shadowy seaweed ghost, swept by ethereal tides. She could not find him in his brain — starred with all children but hers — where between the centres flashed a lacy midnight of orderly pale lightning. And when at last she reduced him to atoms and peered among his shining electrons, he faded and was lost in the light of heaven. She loved him still, but she understood no atom of what she loved. Never mind! The sciences which yesterday had frightened her, to-day cheered her. He was apparently linked with everybody and everything in the universe, and she would have to show courtesy to all his brethren. Why! that was the theory of God, wasn't it? In spite of all the bloodshed of life, God loved the world with a love more than personal, more than impersonal.

Oh, she would open his eyes on the twenty-eighth of June. She would operate on them as he had operated on her throat. That was a mere metaphor, but she had a right to all the metaphors she wanted. To express her new faith she would even say that God's personal love pulses to the very star-tips of the universe. To crown all, Trench would some day be the most surprised man that ever waked up in heaven. For herself she asked no better heaven than to see him kneel and kiss little Mildred.

When the Hallelujah Chorus burst forth, she was ready to join in. When the benediction had been said, and all stood for a minute in silent prayer, she prayed that Elsie might be found and Trench might be changed.

And when she turned round, she saw Trench.

It was impossible. Yet there he stood in the rear of the room, no vision, but real as hope or heaven. He was waiting, and the crowd began to pass him on its way out. He spoke to nobody, though many directed well-bred glances at him as they passed.

John made his way forward to shake hands with the minister. And now through the thinning stream she saw Trench advancing.

"Good morning, Miss Bridgman. Good morning, Mrs. Drummond. Hello, scout!"

"We're terribly glad to see you, doctor," said Helena. "You have given us the most blessed Easter we have ever known. Where do you usually worship?"

"Nowhere, Mrs. Drummond. I am a wandering sheep. This is the first time I've been to church since I used to go with my mother."

"You poor man! You poor overworked faithful doctor. You must come home to dinner with us."

Up to this time Edith had said nothing. She had been standing there with strange new sensations — a shyness she had never felt before. Helena's invitation made her panicky. She simply couldn't have him accept.

"Were you in at the first, Dr. Trench?"

"I followed you in. I heard it all."

"Did the music please you?"

Trench lifted his eyes, and a curious tenderness seemed to stream from their grey depths. "Yes. Somehow it made me think of this rascal here. You put up a good fight, scout."

Bobbie swung the hand he was holding — "It's only two more years before I'll be a really and truly."

"Good business! Here comes your father."

John was indeed coming, and he struck Trench like a planet.

"Hello, Director! Did you think I had forgotten?"

"Am I to be honest?" — Trench's hand was being squeezed too hard.

"Always be honest with your banker." — John only tightened his grip.

"Then I did think so. I came here with the base

design of finding out."—Trench managed to free his hand.

"You are a wise youth, doctor. You deliberately picked out the one day when you thought I might possibly loosen up."

"I'm not denying it. It was a shabby trick."

"Nothing of the sort. Perfectly justifiable. But you don't know what a time I've had getting the land."

"You have bought? You have it already? I offer the most abject apologies."

"I've got it—the whole block south—quit claim—all straight, and back to the Indians. But the owner held out for impossible figures."

"Mr. Drummond, you are what I call a normal man, so far as a man can be who is entangled in our present financial system. I offer you a health certificate from our faculty."

"What on earth are you two men talking about?"

"Sh! not so loud, Helena. There's just a little matter that I haven't mentioned to you and Edith. But while nobody's looking this way, let me present Dr. Isham Trench, Director of the Drummond Children's Pavilion of Lister Hospital."

Helena looked at him—looked at him hard, and thought at first that she saw him, but everything disappeared as the April rose to her eyes.

But Edith stepped up to her brother and kissed him before everybody. "John, I'm a cypripedium, and Dr. Trench is an atom—he told me so himself—but you are a dear. Doctor, you must accept my sister's invitation."

"That's right, Director, and we'll talk business. I feel an inch taller already."

And this time Drummond had him by one arm, and Bobbie by the other.

XX

By Monday, Trench was all in a glow about the pavilion. He forgot that he was an atom. He swore to himself that if the Massachusetts General could get constructive work done, Lister could.

But Monday evening his glow was chilled by Saadi Sereef, who came into the library holding the evening paper in his hand. Trench, having had one consultation with Drummond, was awaiting another, and was turning the leaves of a medical journal.

"Doctor, why they call it Easter? Dictionary says Teutonic goddess of spring. But were human sacrifices offered?"

"I don't know. What excuse for mischief are you seeking?"

"Excuse for New York, by golly! Look, doctor. Here are names of four boys. This morning New York offered all to goddess of Easter."

"Ah! the gunmen."

"Not men, doctor. Boys. Kids."

Trench nodded. "I daresay they died game. Here in Chicago I knew Ewald, Frank, Phil, and Tommy. They too died game."

"What! No remorse?"

"Not a bit."

They looked at each other. Saadi's eyes were misty, and the doctor's fingers had closed around the medical journal as if holding a severed limb together.

Trench spoke, slowly and softly. "Tom was one of eleven children, as nice a little boy as you ever saw. His mother couldn't — really — with eleven to look

after. There was a fine school across the street, locked for seventeen hours each day. There was a saloon around the corner, and a hole under the viaduct. He had those two resources, and he had us around him — a million miles away. They killed a truck-farmer with no more compunction than we had killed their souls. But perhaps we had better not say souls."

"I guess doctor had better say it. In Halsted we talk Halsted."

"All right — killed their souls. And — you'd better forget them, like the rest of us."

Saadi gave a muscular twist which was half shrug and half shiver. "Chicago is not afraid? Even Black Austria would be afraid."

The bell rang, and Saadi rose to go.

Drummond came in as Saadi went out, and banker and physician got down to business. To quote words once applied to a less humane plot, the great consult began. After it was over, Trench sat up most of the night making drawings. Tuesday morning the sheets were in the hands of an architect with a demand for clean blue-prints within twenty-four hours. Trench telephoned for a reservation on the Limited for Wednesday afternoon. He was going to New York, for a talk with one or two hospital men.

The prints were delivered early Wednesday morning, and Trench was looking them over when Saadi dropped in again.

"I do not wish to intrude, doctor."

"You are most welcome, Saadi. I've seen very little of you this year."

"Well, doctor, I see plans of building. Doctor will not build one more Menagerie. Doctor will sure not build Mosque. Therefore doctor will build hospital for kids."

Trench laid the plans aside. "And Saadi," he said, "will keep his mouth shut for a month or so."

Saadi bowed. "What doctor says to Saadi is more binding than laws of Shariat. But on St. George's day, Saadi will celebrate. April twenty-third is doctor's birthday, and in Balkans April twenty-third, old style, is birthday of St. George. St. George is patron of kids. St. George was fond of lilies of valley, and in this room on this table it will be one dozen dozen."

"Thank you, my son. But you and I aren't much on symbols, and I am already enough in your debt."

Saadi stared. "You — you Schwabski hakim! You save my life, you give me home, — and you dare say thing like that!"

"I mean," said Trench, "that during these months in which you have been mostly absent from me in the spring, you have taught me something. I have been shivering lest you should carry some of our common ideas farther than I carry them."

"Doctor means Saadi is awful warning?"

"That's too strong, but let it go at that. Well, I'm talking like a man of leisure. Fact is, I'm not going to college to-day. I'm off to New York."

"So? Doctor will miss one day of Surgical Congress."

"I'm not going to the Congress."

"Well, doctor, I hope Trench hospital kids will not have to fight Wu's kids."

"I hope not."

"It will come, doctor. Panama Canal settles it. But I much prefer peace."

Trench surveyed him quizzically. "I seem to note a fall of temperature."

"Doctor thinks I have passed crisis? Doctor thinks I may get well?"

"I hope so. What serum have you been using?"

"Oh, mixture. Trench and Jew mixture."

"Ah, Becker has been good for you."

"I did not say Becker. I have been reading New

Testament. It is wild Jewish book, all about Bogs coming down as doves, and prophets born without influence of centrosomes. It is not so much commonsense as Koran, but I am sick of commonsense. It is full of wild dreams about all men must stick together in peaceful love, because Bog sent down son to die for all. That is craziest pipedream in world, worse than what Chat says legend of Buddha turning self into rabbit to feed brown men in famine. Oh, much worse. But, doctor, think of nerve man must have to get off such yarn as that. I like Issa of Galilee. He sure had nerve. Doctor, I did even go once with Deland in prayer-meeting."

It was impossible for Trench not to laugh. "I hope—" he began, but had to stop and smother his amusement.

"Well, doctor hopes. This is third time he has hoped to-day. Hope is most terrible of all passions. I think most likely hope is body itself. You could say heart of hope, esophagus of hope."

Having laughed again and recovered his poise, Trench assented. "I have been discovering the same thing, Saadi."

Saadi pulled out his watch and looked at it. "This walking rose which Ameen calls Saadi will be late to class. Oh, gosh! I am tired of medicine!"

"Tut, tut! You have stuck to it admirably."

"Thank you, doctor, but I will never be consulting physician."

"Why should you be? Such fellows as I are already out of date. Why not spend a few years in my laboratory here? If you can find out what the exact cause of rickets is, every negro in Chicago will bless you."

Saadi was much amused. "I see Dr. Saadi Sereef analysing chemistry of nigger-baby, world without end I don't think."

"Well, what do you really want to do?"

"Be surgeon in war, doctor, if it comes this summer. If not, get acquainted with Ewald, Frank, Phil, and Tommy."

"I told you," said Trench in a low voice, "to forget those boys."

"Doctor tells me things I cannot forget. It is not proper to hang boys who are not twenty years old. Even in Black Austria it is not done. Even in Black Austria—" Saadi was staring as if he saw a vision. Months afterward, Trench remembered that look.

"Well, so long, doctor, and have nice trip. At last I go to college."

But Saadi did not get to college that day. As he was descending the stairs he was met by a youth in uniform, who removed his cigarette long enough to ask if any guy named Sereef lived there. Saadi signed for the message, took it to his room, and locked the door before reading it. It was very short. It whitened his face and stretched him on Jaffer's leather couch. But he did not turn on the gas this time.

XXI

IN those April days the boys were already thinking of the end of the semester. Becker was resting on his laurels. Ameen and Chatterjee were not exactly resting on their oars, but each in his own way was serene, feeling that whatever we fail to be intellectually, we are still immortal souls. Wu was grinding like a mill, slow and sure. Deland was cramming as if the devil were at his heels.

At ten minutes past five, Thursday, April 16, Becker, the man of leisure, found his leisure interrupted. Saadi strode into the room, and laid a note on his desk. It was written on the paper of the Congress Hotel. "Mr. B. Rosenvine," it read, "requests the honour of seeing His Highness, Agri Sodde, at the Russian Consulate, to-morrow, Friday, at ten o'clock."

"Apparently a gentleman of my race," said Becker. "And somebody who knows what they call you in Bokhara. Highness sounds pretty elevated for a good mujik like you."

"It is my father's agent," snapped Saadi. "He will be registered at hotel as Roskoff. Damn him up and down and upstairs and downstairs."

"Oh, I see. You and he are not exactly pobratims, as they say in Servia."

"We? We elective brothers? If he speaks to me I will kill him."

"Then you had better let me write a polite declination for you."

"I have already written and sent by District Telegraph kid. I said, 'His Highness presents compliments to Pig of Jew and will he please go to hell.'"

Becker laughed. "The gendarmes were very wise to lock you up in Tashkent prison. Now, I don't want to butt in, but why are we so hard on Mr. Rosenvine?"

Saadi stamped his foot. "I cannot tell Becker. I wish Dr. Trench was here. My father is murderer. I have sworn I will not see him till he has called himself brute."

"Bozhemoy, bozhemoy," murmured Becker. "A social democrat enraged about a trifle like murder! Well, this gentleman may be bringing your father's apologies for removing your friend, whoever she was."

"Cut it out, Becker. It was my own brother. My father is worse than Fourth Ivan. It is me that he wishes to bend. But he cannot."—Saadi began to emit tears of rage.

"What does he want to bend you for?"

"Becker, you are still damn fool. Can't you see he wants me to come back? He wants me to strut round streets of Yalta, so he can brag he has educated son, and say Saadi sides with him against my mother Ila."

Becker's telephone rang. Chat was talking. "Becker, some lady desires to speak to Dr. Trench, and I informed same that the doctor is on his way to New York, and the answer does not satisfy. I will put you on the line."

The person proved to be the operator at the Congress Hotel. She said that a gentleman named Roskoff had left a message for Dr. Trench. Well, telephoned Becker, what did the gentleman want of Dr. Trench? — He wanted Dr. Trench to call on him that evening. "Tell him," said Becker promptly, "that Dr. Trench's oldest student will call."

As Becker hung up, Saadi whirled on his heel in disgust. "You are Jew all right. You will go when anybody calls."

"It is true that I am a Jew, your Bokharan Highness, but I am also Dr. Trench's friend, and I do not

intend to see Rosenvine's red-count go trickling all over the library rug. I propose to do business with Rosenvine."

"Well, go to it, and damn both sheenies. When you want to speak to me, you won't find me." Saadi slammed the door.

Nothing daunted by his friend's sarcasm, Becker kept his appointment. At eight o'clock he was shown up to Mr. Roskoff's room. Mr. Roskoff rose to meet him, and proved to be a dapper gentleman of fifty, with grey hair, eyeglasses, and a closely trimmed beard. He glanced at Becker's card.

"Es ist ein deutscher Name. Does Herr Becker speak German?"

"Not very well, Mr. Roskoff. I understand it, but I am a Russian Jew. I changed my name for good and sufficient reasons."

"Ah, ha," said the suave, high voice. "I confess to you, my friend, I also am of Israel, and am called Benjamin Rosenvine. But German is my Muttersprache, and my business in Chicago is delicate, and if it is your kind permission, I now speak German."

Thenceforth he proceeded in German. He had the honour to be the European business agent of His Highness Astanakoul-beg-biy-Kushbegi, sometime Vasi of Bokhara. His agency consisted chiefly in looking after investments and the sale of cotton, and negotiating the purchase of machinery for His Highness' cotton mills at Kermineh. Latterly he had purchased far more machinery than His Highness could personally make use of, the reason being that the present Kushbeg, Nasrulla, was in constant communication with the Personage whose representative Rosenvine had the honour to be. He would not conceal from Herr Becker that his distinguished principal was technically in disgrace, but added that His Highness was almost as influential in exile as he had been in office.

Becker politely inquired where Mr. Rosenvine bought his machinery.

"In New London chiefly. Do you by any chance know a Mr. Gardner, with the Brown Gin Company?"

"No, Mr. Rosenvine."

"Mr. Gardner has invented a wonderful machine which picks cotton from the bolls. His Highness is much interested, for a certain reason. Taxes are farmed out in Bokhara, and the government is dependent on the assessors. The assessors come when they choose. If American cotton is grown, the bolls fall open and are ruined before the assessor arrives. It will be easier for His Highness, through Nasrulla Beg, to introduce Mr. Gardner's cotton-picker than to control the assessors, and I have just placed a large order with the Brown Gin Company. But I must not talk of these things. You will wish to see my credentials."

Mr. Rosenvine brought a French document in which the name of Rosenvine was prominently displayed, his duties and powers were briefly specified, and the signature of His Highness was written both in French and in Persian.

Now to the point. His Highness had a son named Agri Sodde Sherif Hadji, who had long resided in Vienna, but whom Mr. Rosenvine had easily traced to the United States. Through his letters to a certain Bokharan girl, Prince Agri was known to be continuing his medical studies. Inquiry in New York had revealed the fact that he had tried to enter the medical school of Columbia University, but had been rejected on account of insufficient acquaintance with English. He was known to have started for Chicago.

"You may already have guessed, Herr Becker, that the young man who is living at Dr. Trench's is no other than Prince Agri. He applied at Columbia University under the name of Saadi Sereef, and on my arrival yesterday I telephoned to one or two medical colleges. I

found him registered at Lister College under the same name, and his address was given me as in the care of Dr. Trench in Halsted Street. I am sorry not to find Dr. Trench at home, but am exceedingly glad that he has an able representative, because I have a certain communication to transmit."

"From his father?"

"Yes, Herr Becker. I left Yalta with a message. His father has never despaired of seeing this headstrong youth take his position in the world of affairs. Prince Agri is a young man of considerable ability, and is a great friend of the present Emir of Bokhara. His Highness has never abandoned the hope that Agri would succeed Nasrulla Beg as vizier."

Becker smiled. "The young man does not strike me as being of a judicial temperament."

Rosenvine answered somewhat sharply. "In the Orient, Herr Becker, the arrogant judicial temperament is unknown. As a Russian, you should be aware of that fact. Cold pretence of justice is a mark of England and my own country, and I do not admire it. In Bokhara mercy is shown, and the occasional severe judgments are justified."

Becker returned to his muttons. "Would it be indiscreet to inquire the nature of the message?"

Rosenvine sank deep into his arm chair and joined his finger-tips.

"Herr Becker, there was a disagreement between father and son about a certain affair that I am not at liberty to disclose. His Highness is not prepared to admit himself to have been in the wrong, but he desires Agri to return to Europe, to join him at his present place of residence in the Caucasus, and to make himself master of his father's political experience. In consideration of Agri's doing so, His Highness is prepared to make him a large allowance — a matter of twenty thousand roubles per annum."

Becker shook his head. "The Prince, if I am to call him so, is a very emphatic man, and I should hardly expect him to look upon such a proposition favourably. The Prince is sensitive about money matters. If the misunderstanding was of a serious nature, Saadi would regard the offer as little short of an insult."

"You are very diplomatic, Herr Becker. I know Prince Agri. On a given occasion he struck me across the face with his cane. Permit me to say that I am glad not to have met him. I sent him a courteous request to meet me at the Russian Consulate, and he replied in — well, rather intemperate terms."

Becker smiled. He recalled the intemperate terms himself.

"I do not hold it against the boy, Herr Becker. What difference does it make? As the Talmud says, *Mah nafke minoh*?"

"That is hardly a correct use of the Talmud phrase, Mr. Rosenvine. '*Mah nafke minoh*' is what these Americans call pragmatism. It means, 'Find out what is the practical difference.' Excuse me for correcting a brother in Israel, and let me say that you show a spirit worthy of Hillel."

"I accept the correction, Herr Becker. Fortunately or otherwise, the message which I now have to convey to the Prince is quite different, as you shall hear. On my way to Chicago I stopped in Detroit to look at the automobile industry. His Highness has an excellent German car at Yalta, but he asked me to investigate American cars. The automobile is popular in the Caucasus, and even in Samarkand, though it has not yet reached the city of Bokhara. At Detroit I received a telegram relayed from New London."

Becker listened intently.

"It contained the very unfortunate news of the death of the Princess Ila."

"Who is the Princess Ila?"

"She is Agri's mother; and he has always been devoted to her. I violate no confidence in saying that she has not for years resided in Bokhara. Bokharan standards of masculine morality are not the same, my dear Herr Becker, as prevail in Israel. You are well aware of this."

"Of course, Mr. Rosenvine. Are you about to ask me to inform Saadi of his mother's death?"

"If you will kindly do so. And I fear I shall have to trespass upon your kindness still further. The Prince must return to Turkestan at once. Not to Bokhara — that is unnecessary and unadvisable — and perhaps he should not go to Yalta until he can see the reasonableness of his father's wishes. But he must go to Tashkent, and I should like to place in your hands a sum of money sufficient for his needs — say four thousand roubles."

"Very good, Mr. Rosenvine. But he needs no such sum to reach Tashkent. I came from Moscow on a tenth of it."

Rosenvine smiled sarcastically. "Some of our brethren have done it for even less. But the boy will be wealthy now, and it is proper that he should travel as befits his rank."

"He does not care for rank."

Rosenvine waved a bland declination to argue. "God knows what Prince Agri cares for. He is the most baffling mixture of arrogance and democracy that has ever come into my somewhat varied experience of life."

"That is correct! Well, you will place the money in my hands now?"

"To-morrow, Herr Becker, as soon as the banks open. As soon as you are good enough to telephone me of the Prince's consent to return, I will send cash by messenger. He can catch a steamer on Saturday if he is prompt."

"Is this money from his mother's estate?"

"I wish that it were, but that is impossible. Agri is his mother's heir, but until he reaches Tashkent and qualifies as executor, no more money can reach him from that source. No, the money is his father's — or, let us say, I will advance it myself. If the sum strikes him as insufficient, I will increase it, though I hardly feel justified at present in going above five thousand roubles."

"But will he accept his father's money, or yours either?"

Rosenvine emitted a mild exclamation. "Quatsch, quatsch, Herr Becker! If there were half a million roubles awaiting you in Tashkent, would you long entertain scruples as to railroad tickets?"

There was evidently no more to be said. Jew had met Jew and been answered, and Becker took his leave.

He walked slowly down Michigan to Jackson, and so west. The whole affair seemed like something out of the Arabian Nights. In common Jewish prudence he ought to check it up. There was no use to see the Russian Consul in a matter like this. If there was any screw loose, it would be political, and the Consul was the last person to consult. Becker's fear was that Rosenvine might be an agent of the secret police to get Saadi back on Russian soil.

As he passed the Western Union Building, a thought struck him. Rosenvine had mentioned the Tashkent office of Astanakoul Beg. He would wire that office. He concocted several queries in Russian, but they were pretty long, and he tore them up. At last he got one to suit him. It merely asked whether the Princess Ila was dead, and ended with "Answer ten words paid, Becker, care Western Union, Chicago." He sent that wire and it cost him more than fourteen dollars, and it left him no carfare. So he walked home.

XXII

BECKER awoke on the morning of the seventeenth with the sense that he had a hard day's work before him. He was a thoroughgoing agnostic, and he did not fancy the task of informing Saadi that his mother was dead. The proper man to tell such news was Deland. At least, he wanted Deland around when the operation was performed.

He bathed and dressed, and went to Deland's bedroom. That youth was yawning, but not yet risen.

"Deland, you can't go to college to-day. I want you here."

Deland shied a pillow at him. "Get out, you husky brute. Soon as the Doctor goes away, you've got to boss me."

"Well, turn it around then. I want you to stay at home and boss me. I'm in trouble."

"I should worry. I'll be in trouble myself if I don't get to quiz this morning. Did it never occur to your lop-sided senior cerebrum that we aren't all vamoosing the ranch in a few weeks?"

"Deland, are you religious?"

"Well, in a weak and feeble way, I guess so. What's the matter?"

"Saadi's mother is dead."

Deland emitted a long whistle, arose from bed, stripped off his pajamas, and began to splash his six feet of leanness, so that the sprinkled Becker hastily retired into the study.

In five minutes the Yankee emerged, still damp from his ablutions.

"Tell me about it."

Becker narrated the whole affair. Then they went together to Saadi's room, but Saadi was absent, and his bed had not been occupied save by the sleek cat "Jaffer." Then they went out to breakfast together, and on returning, took up their position in Saadi's study. The news had driven all thought of work from Deland's mind. He brought in his mandolin and strummed minors on it as they waited.

It was ten o'clock before Saadi appeared. Deland was playing a tune called "I'm just awearyin' for you," and Saadi sat down to listen. Nobody said good morning, and Deland played on till the tune was finished. But "Jaffer" came out and rubbed himself against Saadi's ankles and finally jumped upon his shoulder.

"It is beautiful piece, Deland Chucklehead. Was Becker telling you about pig of Jew?"

"Yes, old man, I know the whole business."

"Well, Becker, it was no letter from papa with apology."

"No, Saadi."

"Becker is awful sober this morning. But I told him it would be so. My mother told me my father would never send. She is wise woman. My mother is wisest and best woman in Bokhara. All people call her Ila Lala, which is Ila the Blessed. Poor people have about my mother a song."

He began in his softest voice to chant, but stopped suddenly.

"It is wonderful! Still they sing, though she lives not now in Bokhara. She is in Troitsky near Tashkent."

"Old man," said Deland, "have you heard recently from your mother?"

"Yes, I had letter with money week ago to-day. Friday is good luck day for Moslems, even if wandering kids go not in mosque."

Saadi opened the drawer of his desk and lifted a neat package of square blue envelopes. He took the top letter, sat down, and murmuringly ran it over, stroking the cat as he did so.

"Does she speak of her health, old man?"

"She is well. My mother would always be well if my father would be kind to her. Listen here, Deland. Here is joke in mamma's letter. 'I am not allowed to eat sweetmeats, because doctor says they make gas press on my heart. But it is not gas which presses on my heart — it is happy bahlul of other days.' It is little joke with tears in it, for bahlul means spirit; Ameen would understand. Poor mamma, to make joke with tears in it."

"Saadi kid — I can't throw any airs about your being a prince and all that, I ain't used to it yet — but say, boy, don't you know that tears always lie close to jokes? We never know when sorrow is coming our way."

Saadi stared. "What is matter, Deland Chuckle-head? Is this another Bogumil prayer-meeting? Do not be gloomy with me. I am gloomy enough. I wish I could once again see mamma, and you will make me cry. In letter she says, 'Come home to me — it is not necessary to come through Russia.'"

"Oh, gee, old man, I've got something to say to you, and I don't know how, because I've been through it myself and it just knocks you over when you hear it. I wish you were a Christian, it would be so much easier. — I'm terribly afraid you won't ever see your mother alive again."

Saadi turned violently, and the cat fell to the floor. "Do not carry joke too far."

"It is no joke. Becker had it from your father's agent."

"If he had it from Rosenvine, it is sure no joke. It is damn lie."

At the same moment, however, he began to tremble. He arose and paced the room, his teeth chattering. "It is lie. Can't you see through lies, you two chuckle-heads? My father says to pig of Jew, 'Tell him his mother is dead; that will bring him.' I will go now and kill Rosenvine."

Saadi dashed into his bedroom, emerged with a formidable revolver, and snapped it open to be sure it was loaded. But before he had got the barrel back into place, Deland made a football slide which caught him in the knees, and Becker had the gun out of his hands.

"We don't like to rough-house you, old man, but we can't let you go off your trolley, you know."

For answer, Saadi threw himself on the floor and grovelled like a madman. The cat scrambled out of the way and retreated to the bedroom. Weeping, choking, rolling, the man seemed totally bereft of his senses. The other men did not know what to do. Becker sat quietly in Jaffer's arm-chair, Deland stood gazing down on the maniac. The two of them were strong enough to tie him, but would that help matters?

Deland, of course, was depending entirely on Becker's judgment. But if Saadi's hypothesis was correct, Rosenvine's message was the last refinement of cruelty.

The force of the attack spent itself in a few minutes, and Deland helped Saadi to the leather couch, where he lay in comparative silence, occasionally muttering to himself.

Lunch time came. Deland had telephoned down to Wu, and Wu now appeared with a smoking trencher of soup, and rice, and vegetables, and a plate of pork chops. Saadi stared at him in silence. The situation was different from that first situation, eight months before.

But Wu held up the salt-cellar and said exactly what he had said on the former occasion—"Not pink, like

salt of Karshi, but equally good for purposes of friendship. Also I have brought souvenirs of the Stock Yards — fourth to sixth lumbar inclusive.”

Saadi sat up, pressing his hand to the back of his head. Trench had radiographed that neck and found the vertebræ intact, but the emotions of the morning had brought back the old pain.

“Mr. Wu, you are gentleman and mandarin and good judge of liquor. I will leave instructions in will for descendants to go easy with all little Wus when war comes.”

Wu departed without asking questions, and the three men essayed the meal. It was Wu's supreme culinary effort, for he had easily guessed that Saadi was in some serious trouble, and his undemonstrative good-will took the only form it was permitted to take. Saadi touched nothing except the soup, but saw to it that Deland ate the chops.

After his soup, Saadi lighted a cigarette. Apparently it gave his brain a fillip, for presently he exclaimed, “It is all clear what to do. It was clear all time, only I was crazy. I will cable old man in Tashkent who was once servant of House. He cannot read or write, but he will find help, and he will send me true word about mamma.”

“Good business, old man! You've got the best bean of the bunch after all.”

Becker said nothing. He was waiting for an answer to his own wire.

Saadi wrote his message, telephoned for a District Telegraph boy, and counted out the money for message and answer.

“Deland, play more on mandolin. Sing something funny.”

Deland tuned up and twanged Jaffer's favourite song:

"Oh, du lieber Halsted Street, Halsted Street, Halsted Street,
Oh, du lieber Halsted Street, alles ist hin!
Magd is weg, Geld is weg, alles weg, alles weg—"

"That is enough," interrupted Saadi. "That is German. Also it is about money which I am short of, and girl which — is verboten. Play American tune."

Deland played "Old Kentucky Home," and Saadi listened appreciatively. "It's fine. It is what makes boys go in war. When you want to raise army in America, play Kentucky Home in all brass bands. How did Balkans send such big army against Turkey? I was in hospital corps and I have seen. It was always Kentucky Home. Especially it was brothers. In Balkans, brothers are dearer than fathers, and sisters are dearer than wives. Oh, yes, much dearer."

"That's queer," said Deland.

"Man is queer animal, Deland. He lives in many places besides Halsted and Salem. He has swept over world like accidental fire of slow combustion. And among hills of Balkans, man lives for brothers. Man swears to be elective brothers. Becker knows about that — he asked me sarcastic am I not pobratim with pig of Jew. When army smashed Turks at Kirk Kiliseh, did it yell, 'Lick damn Turks for love of Cross?' It did not. Whole battalion heard one kid named Jivan was captured. Every damn Serb yells out, 'Go in after Jivan!' And they went in, by golly, and came back with Jivan, but only few of battalion came back with him. I saw Jivan in hospital. He was little sawed-off-son-of-gun. Why should whole damn battalion die for little sawed-off-son-of-gun? No reason. They were pobratims with Jivan."

"Awfully interesting," said Deland, glad to see Saadi back in his old vein — too glad to protest against the volley of oaths.

The messenger boy came and took Saadi's message and money, but still Becker and Deland stayed on, un-

welcome guests. Becker had the big revolver in his pocket, but there were others in Chicago, and Becker was taking no chances.

They made him talk more about his hospital experiences. They made him sing a Servian song which he thought he remembered, though he broke down and could not carry it through.

It began,

“Shto Morava moutna tetche,
Da li Pasha konye poyie
Il Pashina voyska brodi?”

When they asked him to translate, he said, “Why does Morava flow all bloody? Why do not Pasha’s horses drink it? Why do not his soldiers cross it? It was sisters who were bathing. It was soldiers who were killing. Poor Todora lay there bloody. She was dead, but lips were speaking. ‘Dearest sister, Olivera, tell our mother not to sorrow. Say to her that I am married. Say a big stone is my bridegroom.’”

“I guess you like those folks pretty much, old man.”

“Yes. It was best people in world. They were gentle and brave. They did not make impersonal war-machine like German army. They fought for brothers and sisters. When they swore oaths, they did not break. They loved their mothers, too. Oh —”

Saadi was wringing his hands and walking up and down the room.

Deland racked his brain for something comforting, but his brain was mostly full of statistics such as he had shown Saadi at their first meeting. Finally he blurted out,

“What’s the percentage of illegitimacy in the Balkans?”

“Zero, Deland.”

Becker himself looked surprised. “Is that a fact? Russia is Slav, and our percentage is therefore low —

only about twenty-seven in the thousand, where Germany has ninety, and Austria a hundred and forty. But I didn't suppose —"

He broke off and answered a knock at the door. It was that of an A. D. T. boy, with a message for himself. Becker broke the seal. The note was in German, to the following effect:

Mr. B. Rosenvine begs to inform Mr. Becker that he has this minute received wire from Tashkent office of Vasi that a message was received signed "Becker" requesting confirmation of news of death of Princess Ila. Tashkent office instructs Mr. Rosenvine to inform Mr. Becker that in accordance with instructions received from the House, it cannot communicate with strangers. All information may be had from the agent of His Highness.

Mr. Rosenvine regrets that he does not seem to command the confidence of Mr. Becker. Under the circumstances, Mr. Rosenvine is leaving Chicago this afternoon by the Pennsylvania Limited Express. Up to five o'clock Mr. Rosenvine's offer will hold good. He now has in hand the sum of three thousand dollars, American currency, which he will despatch to Dr. Trench or Mr. Becker, for the use and benefit of His Highness Agri, on receipt by telephone of Agri's promise to proceed without unnecessary delay to Tashkent. The message need not be telephoned by His Highness personally. Mr. Becker's word will be sufficient.

Becker read it through twice. There could not be the slightest doubt that Saadi's mother was dead, or that money was ready for him if he would take it. Becker laid the open message on Saadi's desk, as Saadi had laid the message of the day before upon his own.

Saadi picked it up and read it. Then he crumpled it into a small wad, and went into his bedroom. They heard the iron bed sing out sharply as he threw himself upon it. They heard the muffled choking. They looked at each other helplessly.

Ten minutes went by. It was three o'clock, and time was flying. "He's got to call the man up," said Becker. "We may as well tackle him."

"Wait a minute, Beck."

Deland picked up his mandolin, and softly played Kentucky Home once more. Then he changed the key, and began to sing the song he had been humming when Saadi arrived:

“Just a-wearyin’ for you,
All the time a-feelin’ blue —”

He sang the song through softly, went into the bedroom, and sat down beside his unhappy friend.

“Did you hear me hitting up the music, old man?”

No answer. Saadi’s face was hid in the pillow, and “Jaffer” was purring beside it.

“Do you know what I think, old man? I think your illustrious old dad is lonesome for his wandering kid. I think he’s just a wearyin’ for you. And I’ll bet he’s a wearyin’ for her too. He may not have done the right thing — and he’s proud, because he has had too much power. But you are his boy and her boy. Think of it. We want you just to take your nose out of that pillow and say yes. Becker will pass the word along, and your Ikey at the Congress will shuck out the simoleons, and we will let him fade away on the Pennsy. The doctor will be home Monday morning, early, and you can wait and say good-bye. We’ll see you off in grand style, and brag about you for the rest of our natural lives. Be a good kiddo.”

Saadi answered nothing, but he lifted his tear-stained face from the pillow and slowly got up. He walked into the study, and Becker thought that the day was won. But Saadi merely locked the door leading into the hall and put the key in his pocket.

That was the end of Rosenvine and his propositions. The three men sat there till half-past five — the time at which the Jew’s train departed — and nobody said a word. Saadi pretended to be reading the encyclopedia. Becker looked out of the window. Deland gnawed his

finger-nails and reflected on the difficulty of bringing the unregenerate soul to Christ.

At half-past five there was a knock. Saadi unlocked the door and Wu handed him the evening paper. "Dinner will be ready in fifteen minutes. Will the Triumvirate eat with us?"

Nobody answered. Saadi was glancing at the paper. "Jivio! Good for Mitchell," he remarked. "Mayor of New York did just miss to join line of assassinated pigs, Wu. It was damn shame to try to kill good man like Mitchell."

"Who tried, Mr. Sereef?"

"Oh, Irishman, of course. If Irish or Slav cannot be king, he wishes nobody to be king. Good night, you Chuckleheads." He took his hat, bowed profoundly to Wu, and went out.

Presently Jaffer's room was deserted, but for "Jaffer" on Jaffer's bed.

XXIII

BECKER and Deland declined Wu's invitation, went out to dinner together, and ate in silence. But when he had finished his meal, Becker spoke up.

"Do you regard this business as finished with?"

"Gee, I don't know. What do you suppose the doctor will say?"

"The doctor will say nothing. He will hardly spare us time enough to tell him."

"Oh, I don't know, Beck. He'll be pretty busy, but the doctor is an awfully good friend."

"Of course, Deland, but he doesn't waste any pity. He will think Saadi is a fool, and let it go at that."

"But how's the kid going to live? His revenue is all off."

"Very likely the doctor will pay his bills till the end of the year, and then kick him out to shift for himself."

"Say, Beck, you're a good deal more commercial than the doctor is. If Isham is willing to pay Saadi's bills here, I'll bet you a large red apple he says to Saadi, 'Here's a steamer ticket; now go to your dad and take your medicine, and go to Tashkent — if that's the name of the place — and get what belongs to you.'"

"He might," admitted Becker.

"You feel that the Ikey was sure enough authorised, don't you?"

"Oh, yes, Rosenvine is straight enough. At first I was afraid he had a political reason up his sleeve, but the message from Tashkent straightens that out. I notice that Russia is not following up her bad boys very closely."

"You ought to know."

"I do know. As for the doctor, it seems too bad that he should have to pay Saadi's way out of the country. I should like to see Rosenvine offer *me* six thousand roubles for a pleasure trip."

"Same here. I should admire it. Does it take that much to get to the jumping-off place where Saadi ought to show up?"

"I should say not. Give me a tenth of it and I'll go, and have tea at every station on the trans-Siberian."

"How much is a tenth of it—in plain United States?"

"Three hundred."

"That isn't such a much. Look here, Beck, a great little idea has just floated across me sensorium. Three guesses."

"I guess you would like to beat the doctor to it. But you haven't got three hundred. If you have, you may pay for this dinner."

"Thanks awfully, my fat friend. But there are five of us, and we ain't any of us sore on Saadi."

"I am, Deland. I could kick him from here to Tashkent for missing a chance like that. But I won't stand out if the rest want to play the loving brother."

"Beck, you are not so stingy as you look. Come on home and help corral the bunch."

At seven o'clock they had the whole family assembled in Trench's library. Becker acted as chairman. He laid the situation before them with great pains, but said nothing about Deland's proposition. He wanted to see if the other fellows would have the same thought spontaneously. When he had finished, he called for suggestions.

There was silence for a minute, while the tall old clock that had once stood in the Trench mansion ticked steadily. The reader will remember that Huxley likened the mind of man to the noise of a clock. It reports

what is going on, but is powerless to move the wheels, so Huxley thought, or so he thought at one time in his life.

Ameen was first to speak. "I am sure that we all grieve with Saadi, and I am sure that we all love him. He says terrible things to us, but he does not mean them, and everybody here has had the good sense not to be drawn into a quarrel. I have my own reasons for thinking that at some time in the past he has lost a sister as well as a brother, and now he is called upon to lose his mother. We must make him feel that he is in his own family. I told him that in Persian, the day he came."

Deland spoke next. "The kid has a heart. Once I referred to my own mother — you know that she died when I was a little shaver — and Saadi reached over and put his hand on mine as gentle as a woman."

Chat bore testimony. "He is kind to children. On one occasion I observed him reassuring a little girl, and bestowing a dollar to buy a doll or some such thing. Wu, what is your mature judgment?"

Wu bowed, remembering what Saadi had said to him at the stock-yards. "It is my mature judgment that His Highness is too complimentary to the Japanese, but kind to cats."

Everybody broke into cheerful laughter.

"Gentlemen, these remarks are interesting, but they are not suggestions. We are face to face with a problem. What is to become of our prince? He is not prepared to practice. Perhaps some of you can suggest employment for him in Chicago."

Ameen again took the lead. "Saadi cannot earn anything in Chicago. It is a very great pity if he must abandon his course. He would be a great power if he could return to Bokhara with a modern medical training."

Deland again followed. "Bet your boots, Ameen. A real fighting prince with a medical training would be

a hummer of a health officer. If the politicians got in his way, he would jug the bunch."

Chatterjee agreed. "There are uses for a disposition of Saadi's nature. Gita says it is our duty to fight on occasion, and Bokhara would offer excellent occasion. I am sure we should like to hear Wu's mature judgment."

Wu bowed. "My mature judgment is that if Boxer indemnification money is to be spent in Chicago, His Highness' money, which is probably of the same sanguine appearance, should also be spent here. I move the honourable chair that an assessment be levied on all present for the purpose of importing blood-money from Tashkent to Chicago."

"I second the motion," said Ameen.

"It is moved," said Becker, "that we offer to lend Saadi the sum of three hundred dollars, the amount to be raised by assessment, share and share alike. But before putting the question, the chair will remind you that we are poor men, and that Dr. Trench is a rich man."

"Question!" said Ameen.

"Question!" said Deland.

"Question!" said Chatterjee.

"Question!" said Wu.

"Before I put the question I wish to remove any misunderstanding as to my own position. As you all know, I received a Christmas present from the doctor. That kit of instruments never cost him less than a hundred dollars. I have never paid him a cent for room rent. He has paid my tuition. Now all in favour of the question will say ay."

They said it, and the clock ticked on.

"I wish," said Chatterjee, "that some gentleman would advise me where I am to secure sixty dollars."

"Borrow of me," said the Persian.

"Say, Ameen, you don't want to buy a mandolin, do you?"

"Certainly, Deland. I know a Turk who will help me out."

"I was just kidding you. I'll be all right by to-morrow noon. I shall spout the mandolin, and I've got the balance in my jeans. How will you get out of this scrape, Wu?"

"I shall easily save my face, Mr. Deland. Presently I shall telephone an importunate Japanese gentleman that he may have my contemptible prints."

"Not presently, my highborn Daffodil! If Saadi has come in, we have something to say to him."

He rang up Saadi's room, and got an answer. In a few minutes the door opened, and in walked His Highness, cat on shoulder.

"It is council of war? What does bunch want of Saadi?"

Everybody looked at Becker, and Becker looked at Deland, and Deland looked at Ameen. "Old man," said Deland, "we want to talk to you about cats. Ameen will address you on Persian cats and their superiority to yours."

Ameen rose. "Saadi, we have been hearing about your troubles, and we know that you are brave to bear them. We want you to go home and come to us again. The Caravansery would not seem right without you. You are somewhat thorny, but we take the thorn with the rose, and are grateful to Allah."

"Where does cat come in?"

"The cat is named Jaffer, and if Dr. Jaffer were here he would vote with us in our little question of house-administration. To-morrow we shall hand you three hundred dollars, which will see you to Tashkent if you don't give it away to children and cats. If you need it to-night, I have no doubt the druggist will help us."

Saadi stood perfectly still, looking from one man to another. The tears overflowed and ran shamelessly

down his cheeks, as it is possible tears flowed down Bonaparte's in his boyhood. At last he spoke.

"I am sorry Becker is not damn German."

Everybody looked at Becker, as if his appearance might elucidate the remark.

"If Becker was damn German, I would believe race-hatred is pipedream, and I would scratch arm and mingle blood with all of you in elective brotherhood and pobratimstvo. But I will never forget. Jaffer I shall never see, but when you write to him you will say Saadi Sereef sent love."

"Then it is all settled," said Becker. "When shall you sail?"

"Settled? Yes, I settle it. I cannot take money from men that need it more than I."

There was silence, while the tall clock ticked loudly, as if to say that effort is nothing.

"Oh, gee!" burst out Deland. "Won't you discuss it a little bit?"

"No, Deland. I have eighty dollars. It will last long time. I will write to lawyer in Tashkent. Good night now, all dear boys. I go again to Chicago Beach Hotel to spend night and see waning moon on water. Same moon is looking down on ziarat where Ila Lala lies very quiet, with April flowers on breast."

XXIV

Thus failed the effort of the boys to help. They spent a sad week-end, for Saadi did not come home till Monday morning, shortly before the doctor arrived.

Becker went to meet the doctor's train. Trench was looking very well indeed, and assured his student that it had been a most satisfactory flying trip. When they reached home, Becker told him the story, which the doctor heard without interrupting.

"And now, doctor, he has been spending two or three days at the Chicago Beach Hotel. You can easily calculate how long his eighty dollars will last."

Trench nodded. "I like the way you have handled it, Becker. I will see him at once, alone."

Becker departed. Trench wrote a check, and rang Saadi's room.

"Are you there, Saadi?"

"Yes, doctor."

"I should like to see you a minute in the office."

Saadi presently appeared and shook hands.

"Let me examine your tongue."

Saadi obeyed.

"Now your wrist."

Saadi held out his arm.

"The one is dry as a bone and the other feels like a trip-hammer. Forget it, Saadi. You are among friends."

"I know it. I am not afraid of doctor."

"That is good news, and I see that the cause lies deeper."

Saadi was silent, and Trench studied him for half a minute.

"You want me to lend you a thousand, don't you?"

Saadi looked him in the eye. "Yes, doctor."

"How soon?"

"I would like to leave Chicago at two o'clock to-day."

Trench touched a button and summoned Chat. "Get this cashed at once, in gold, and give it to Saadi. Go to the bank across the street."

Chat gasped at the amount, but showed his splendid white teeth in a grin of pleasure, and was off like a shot.

"You believe all that Becker told about, doctor?"

Trench laughed gently. "My dear man, I paid not the slightest attention to him. But you are in terrible anxiety of some sort, and you can count on me."

Saadi broke into a choked sobbing that was nerve-racking to hear. "You are best man in all world, doctor. You are sure to get money back for babies. I am taking away twenty thousand pints certified milk."

"Always right at heart —" said Trench, reflectively. "Shall you return to us? Or is that asking too much?"

Saadi did not answer for some time — perhaps a full minute. He seemed battling with himself about something. Trench waited patiently till the words came.

"God knows, doctor." Saadi spoke with great solemnity.

"I see that in your hour of trial you draw on the old vocabulary."

"Yes, doctor. I cannot live by mechanical vocabulary. I do not believe I have free choice — I must return. I do not believe you have free choice — you must lend. I do not believe there is God — but I must say God. If in all world there is one ounce of ghost in machinery, I want ghost to back me up."

"I understand you, my friend. It hasn't much to do with going to claim a fortune, has it?"

"No, doctor." Saadi arose. "My address will be Grand Hotel, Tashkent."

Trench also arose. He stood silent for a moment, then reached out both hands and put them on Saadi's shoulders. "This is our good-bye, my dear fellow. Becker will help you catch the Lake Shore. God bless you, boy. You see, I partly accept the vocabulary. It is no worse than to wish you good luck."

It was Saadi's turn now. He took the doctor's head between his hands and kissed him on both cheeks, a most un-Moslem performance. "Good-bye, dear man. If I am dead, papa will send money back to you. If I am alive, I will be in Chicago next September."

At this moment Chat approached unseen, and heard the words. He paused, and then entered with the money. Saadi put the bag in his pocket unconcernedly, thanked his brown friend, walked into the library, and held the door open for Trench to pass out. Chat followed and went upstairs. But as Trench was stepping into the street, he heard Saadi speak.

"Doctor!"

"Yes?"

"Please come back! Please 'phone Dean to start lecture with story of how nephritis baby was killed with drinks of water because graduate did not remember what Dr. Trench said. I cannot say good-bye."

Trench came back with a smile, and did indeed telephone a colleague to keep the crowd busy a few minutes. Then he sat down, and Saadi laid a trembling hand on his shoulder.

"It is much to lend Saadi thousand dollars. But again it is nothing."

"Quite right. I follow you."

"But if damfool configuration of energy called Saadi was allowed to ask big favour of great person called Trench, all for sake of imaginary patient called humanity, it would be something doing."

"Well, ask away. Something can be done about those boys, if a little method is used."

"My God, doctor! I do not mean boys — only boys of your own body."

"What!"

"Son of Beg did not mean to knock wind out of son of Halsted. Saadi offers one thousand apologies to his big brother, and begs him to get married. Doctor is very perfect carcass. Doctor is scrapper that never had good chance. Doctor is only democrat in Chicago. Doctor is only man who will die for wandering kids and say don't mention it little thing like that. Doctor is one of three four best men in whole damn world! He should have three sons! If one does not succeed to clean up West Side, but will get shot by white-slavers, it will be two more to finish job!"

"Saadi, you astonish me."

"Oh, wonderful son of gun than can so 'stonish pediatrician! That is Shakspeare. I heard in Haymarket."

"Saadi, you know perfectly well that no three Trenches or three hundred can clean up the West Side."

"Yes, it is so. Nothing is completed, but it is artistic to draw line somewhere. It makes mothers feel better."

"Mothers!"

"Sure, doctor. If my mother was alive she would say, 'My Saadi may die pretty quick now, but he will make good job of it, and it will please me.' If doctor's mother was alive she would say, 'Isham, I want to see you married before I die.'"

Trench was silent. He sat looking straight through Saadi, and Saadi knew when to stop talking. At last the older man spoke.

"I never thought of it before."

"Mothers last long time here," answered a quivering voice, as Saadi laid his hand on his heart. "Your boys will forget you, but they will not forget one who carried

them and took big chance to die. Well, it is enough about mothers. You will promise?"

"No, Saadi."

Saadi reflected. "It is because I have not saved your life."

"I'm not sure that you haven't. But I ask you whether any woman would marry a cynic like me."

"Cynic? I think cynic is man who does not like folks. Doctor likes all, same as sunshine, but doctor would be 'shamed to say so. Doctor is like Issa. Issa was so ashamed when any kid was sick or hungry, he would not let one hand know what other was doing when he did operation for him or gave him handout. Issa did not wear sandwich-board to say he liked folks what Deland says pretty much. Now we will not hear doctor again say cynic."

"Saadi, you have become a shameless flatterer."

"Doctor, you have become damn liar. Dear doctor, you will promise?"

"No."

"Doctor, in this fool world it is all accident whom we know, where we live, whom we marry, by golly. It is not scientific to make promises or keep promises. But we make and keep, for some fool reason which is awful strong. I guess it is just because those about us are those about us."

Trench nodded. "I'll promise you one thing. Never again, so long as I live and have my reason, will I say 'What's the use?' Will that help?"

"You bet! If you say that, pretty quick I will get invitation to wedding. Maybe invitation will not reach me in time. Maybe I will pass in checks first. But it will be all right. Thoughts of Saadi will come to Dr. Trench like pigeons flapping round head. They will say, 'Cheer up, doctor, worst is yet to come.' Well, I guess Dean has begun about nephritis baby, and boys

will be ready to give you Lister yell when you come in. So long, doctor! See you in heaven — I don't think."

It was not Becker alone who saw Saadi off. The five fellow students were there, and Saadi seemed in high spirits.

"In six minutes special train of My Highness will get move on. Now it is to shake paws quick with all dear animals of Menagerie. Good-bye, old Red Beck-erovitch."

"Good-bye, Saadi Mujik. Skoro! Go to it! And don't blow it all in the first week."— Here Becker, who never smoked, handed the departing guest a Lord Lister perfecto.

"Good-bye, Mirza Ameen Djan Beg. Pray for me on general subject of bombs."

"I will, Saadi. Take this rose from me, and upon Your Highness be the peace of God."

"Good-bye, Wu, you yellow old grandson of Expectant High Mukky Muk."

"Good-bye, Altesse. Eat Karshi salt and remember me."

"Good-bye, Deland Chucklehead. Pray for wandering sheep with sawed-off shotgun."

"Saadi, you can bet your last Bokharan cent I'll do it."

"Good-bye, you brown man. Tell Jaffer to come to Tashkent, Grand Hotel, and I will show him hot time in old town to-night."

"Good-bye, Saadi. Shall we see you again in September?"

"Chat, in all inhuman probability you will never again discuss red rugs with me once more. Go home offer thanks to Kali."

When the luxurious train drew out from the La Salle Street station, Saadi stood on the rear platform of the observation car and waved Ameen's rose till he was out of sight. Becker was waving his cap. Ameen had a

hand uplifted as if in benediction. Wu stood at military attention, his hand touching the edge of his spectacles. Chatterjee's palms were joined, the finger-tips touching his chin. Deland wildly flaunted a pennant on which L I S T E R appeared in large letters.

"He was a good scout," said Deland.

"Let us not use the past tense," said Ameen.

They turned away to take the car, but Chatterjee drew Ameen aside.

"Ameen, Saadi invited Jaffer to visit him in Tashkent."

"Why, that was just a pleasantry."

"Well, do you not think it would constitute a compliment or some such thing if Jaffer were to accept?"

"That is a clever idea, Chat. Jaffer is starting for Chicago very soon, I suppose. Would it greatly increase his expenses?"

"I think not. It might cost him twenty-five dollars more, but we could share that. Let us cable him, and not inform the rest. Can you lend me ten dollars?"

"Certainly. But let me bear the expense."

"No. It is my own responsibility, but I will take the ten now, if it is totally convenient."

Ameen gave him the ten, and Chat proceeded to the telegraph stand. He wrinkled his smooth brow for a minute, and then — oh, let it not be regarded as the first rift in the lute of friendship — sent the following message:

R. R. Jaffer, M.D.,
Peshawar, India.

If convenient go Tashkent Grand Hotel remind Prince Saadi owes doctor thousand dollars.

CHATTERJEE.

XXV

“IF convenient!”—Jaffer stared at the bombshell.

It had chased him through the alleys of his native town to the little hospital, and exploded exactly when he needed a steady nerve. This came of almost never writing to Chat. Not once since Christmas had he entertained the boys with a letter about the conditions of things in Peshawar. The hill-tribes had kept the cantonments busy all winter. After four years of docility they had begun their old owl-tricks of swooping down by night to carry off silver and guns. Everybody in Peshawar lived in fear. Dean's hotel had been guarded every night, and so had every shop that could afford it.

It was Tuesday, April 21, the sixth day of the second month of Jomhadi. Jaffer had risen that morning from happy dreams of travel. In a week he would be starting for Chicago, and in six he would be shaking hands with Dr. Trench. Consequently the Caravansery had seemed sublimed in a golden haze. Why, then, when one was so anxious to get back to one's friends, should one's friends arise and smash the whole illusion?

Had the cool Bengali the slightest notion of what he was asking? Did Chat suppose that Tashkent was an island where Jaffer's steamer would stop? The expense of turning aside at Bombay, sailing up the Persian Gulf, and visiting Tashkent by railway could not be an anna less than three hundred rupees.

Oh, this was an absurd intrusion on a perfect morning. To the north arose the eternal barrier, which he, a born Peshawari, had never crossed. He had once been up the Khyber Pass, as everybody had, but not beyond

the limits of English supervision. He and his father had proceeded in a tonga as far as Ali Masjid, and had driven back the whole distance at top speed, before their permit should expire.

As he stared out of the window at the sunlit mountains, a certain boyhood feeling returned. What lay behind them? How often he had heard the stories! But he had been away to school so many years that he had grown to manhood without a single adventure in the land of his nearest neighbours. Perhaps he had better borrow the camel on which he had been exercising all winter, and cross the Amir's country. It would not be safe, but it would be cheap, and if there was any real reason why he should go to Russia, the trip might be considered.

He stood by his chief till they had taken out a ryot's appendix, and then he got excused. He went home and told his mother that the message was nothing to be alarmed at. He went to his room and got out all of Chat's letters, and read them over.

So this Bokharan chap was a prince. The wire used the phrase, though the letters only referred to him as a vizier's son. Here was a photograph of the fellow, with the cat named "Jaffer," taken by Deland. And, apparently, Saadi had a brother in Kabul — a doctor, not a prince.

It was a pleasant proposition — this asking a man to travel a thousand miles and back to dun a prince. At the same time, Saadi had evidently stolen a thousand dollars from the doctor. Chat was a careful fellow, and would not make such a request unless he felt certain that the man was guilty.

The trip by rail and steamer was out of the question. But he might possibly afford the trip if he went by Kabul, and moreover he would have to go to Kabul to make inquiries from that brother. But he would need careful instruction. In this his father could not help

him, for his father was merely a minor government official. Who then? Some Peshawar merchant, preferably an Afghan.

Immediately he thought of Umar Khel, wholesale and retail tea-merchant, whom he had known all his life, and whose fleetest camel he had been riding for exercise. Umar was an Afghan, a Gilzai, untamed by age or sorrow. Umar had a cousin in Kabul who acted as his correspondent there. Jaffer presumed that there was also a correspondent in Bokhara, though the caravan trade with Bokhara was small.

Jaffer lighted a cigarette, strolled out, and made his way to the bazaar.

Umar Khel's shop was open, but he had not yet appeared, and Jaffer sat down to await the master. He presently arrived, tall, thin, and gloomy, with beard of snow. He had never stained it black, as so many Asiatics do at the first onset of age.

Jaffer rose and salaamed. "I am going away, Umar Khel."

Umar gave him one sarcastic look. "Allah be praised!"

Jaffer took the rebuff silently.

"Allah be praised!" repeated Umar Khel venomously. "Rasul will be able to walk freely without keeping his hand on his pocket-book."

"It is a thought which had not occurred to me, Umar Khel, but I perceive the source and sense of it. Your guards are expensive."

Umar Khel glanced at him. "Afreen!" he snarled reluctantly, which was as much as to say that he approved the saucy answer. "And whither goes my Rasul? To Velait?"

"No, not to England, thou friend of my father. I had far rather go to Germany. In fact, however, I return to the land of the free."

"Go in the safety of God, and beware of freedom."

"Freedom, Umar Khel, is as the breath of my nostrils."

"Freedom, Rasul Rahim, is as the breath of a hill-man. Freedom is the breath of a thief. Freedom is a djinn. Freedom is an infidel sect."

Jaffer let him bubble a moment, and tried a new tack. "I venture to repeat that freedom is sweet to me. I long to be out of the sight of Englishmen. Nay, why should I not speak out? I weary of these busybodies."

"Silence, Rasul! The British Raj is just, according to its knowledge and nature."

Jaffer was silent.

"It is not needful to be so suddenly tame. The Raj has its faults."

"I come asking favours, Umar Khel, and I must not speak my mind."

"Now, by Allah, thou shalt! I will not have it said of me in my old age that I muzzled the young camel, for the Khaneh is dead, and my sons are far hence, and I am lonely."

But Jaffer held his peace, thinking of the aged Laal, the Pearl, the wife whom the Afghan would not name, but referred to as "the head of the house." And Jaffer turned his head away, that he might show some sympathy.

The old man regarded that profile keenly.

"Rasul has the eagle nose. He is like an Afghan. He resembles my cousin's son in Kabul."

"Then in Kabul I should like to see your cousin's son. I should like to mount the pass and see the world."

"Bah! The frog mounted a lump of mud and said he had seen Kashmir. Your duty is to the sick of Peshawar. You are too young to remember the father of Amir Habibullah, but when Abdur Rahman came into the kingdom, no man's life was safe. Did Abdur

Rahman hold durbar with justices in wigs? No. He made every man his brother's keeper. If men desired to escape that duty, he struck off a hand. But Jaffer longs for freedom, not for duty. Tauba! Tauba! for shame!" And Umar spat on the ground.

"Umar Khel, the freedom which I most desire is the freedom of Afghanistan. Will you lend me the swift she-camel as far as Kabul? Perchance your nephew would bring the Houri back and visit you here."

"Perchance! It is what Abdul of all things most desires, and what the Amir will not grant him. They that are in shall stay in, and they that are out shall stay out!"

"And does Umar Khel approve such tyranny?"

"Yes! Habibullah follows wisely in the steps of the old lion. He does not want his best young men contaminated by Stamboul."

"Contaminated, Umar Khel?"

"Verily, thou fool. All Islam waxes soft save in the land behind the mountains. Stamboul is full of ether for the body, and ether of materialism for the soul. It is not strange that the infidel has stolen certain provinces away from them. Softness, ever softness! Habibullah will have none of it. Too soon he must face the Russian in a struggle for life."

"Nevertheless I must go, Umar Khel. I must start with Thursday's caravan, for yesterday's has gone."

"My guest is speaking folly, and I shall attend to my correspondence while he digests what I have said. Amar Singh, bring me paper and reed."

While Amar Singh was getting the writing materials, his master proceeded.

"Does Jaffer recall why melons are not to be had in the fruit market in Kabul?"

"No."

"Does he not recall that they are sold in Mandi Kalan near the charcoal?"

"I have never been in Kabul."

"Ah! Jaffer has not climbed the mulberry tree, yet now he girds his loins to climb the kikar thorns. Don't you know that you cannot get to Kabul without the special writ of the Amir?"

"I had forgotten. I have been away six years."

"Rasul, I marvel that you tell it. Not all the asses have followed the camels this day. One remains, and if he tries to follow, he will eat the stick."

"Far be it from me to dispute my father's friend. Behold, I am an ass."

The writing materials came, and the old man slowly began to write. When he had finished his first letter, he looked up.

"You have a passport?"

"Yes."

"You have *ocriti lista* — special permission from the Russian minister of war to ride on the Central Asian Railway?"

"No, Umar Khel. I have said that I am an ass, and behold, Umar Khel is wise and of many years. He will tell me how long it will take to get these things — the Amir's firman, and the Russian writ."

"The first," said Umar Khel, as he took another pen and deliberately began another letter, "you can get in one month. The second you can never get. British subjects living in Peshawar can never hope for *ocriti lista* in Russia. Rasul will now forget that he is the foolish son of a wise father, and Amar Singh will bring us some tea."

Jaffer sighed a drop of his heart's blood, and lighted another cigarette.

By the time the second letter was finished, Amar Singh had brought a steaming infusion of the best

Kangra, with cakes and strawberries. Jaffer accepted a very sweet cake and a cup of tea, though he would much have preferred coffee. Three weaknesses had Jaffer, and these were cigarettes, coffee, and sweet cakes. Three weaknesses — yet a month later they served him well.

"How soon, my ignorant son, do you leave for America?"

"I don't know. I had expected to start this week. But what you tell me breaks my heart."

"Wait till it is healed. Peshawar is pleasant in May, and the raiders are quieting down. With whom do you lodge among the godless be-iman of Chicago?"

"With Hakim Trench. He is my revered master."

"Do not speak like a Hindu. But you may speak to me of Trench."

"He is a great physician, Umar Khel, and young, and especially he has compassion on the sickness of children. I thank the Compassionate One that I was permitted to study with Hakim Trench in the book of the body."

"Peace be upon him. He is only a Christian, but in Sura second it is written that the Christian who believes in the last day shall never be grieved. Well, you have been to me as my own son this day, brave and foolish. To-morrow I have new and wonderful teas due from China. Come after two days, I will give you a gift for Trench."

"I will come, and I will say many thanks in his name."

"A trifle! Wretched stuff! But it is for the friend of my friend, and we will choose a good canister."

XXVI

THE morning after Easter, Edith returned to her studies with a light heart. She was full of joy about the new hospital. Furthermore the personal had begun to run in the newspapers, and she would keep it there till it met Elsie's eye, if it took five years and each year cost her an Easter dress and a summer vacation. She would see this thing through.

Once more, as she bent above her microscope, God seemed to be answering her. The nucleus of every cell divided with a purpose, even if with no other than that of distributing the chromosomes equally among the daughter cells, and beyond that she was willing to trust God. She even became rather enthusiastic about pushing the physico-chemical theory of life to its logical conclusion. Even if somebody should actually find the formula, somewhere among those frightfully complex colloids, no formula could explain the spiritual effort by which it was found.

Tuesday evening, April 21, she was at home, and reading Haldane on respiration. He thought it inexplicable by mechanics, and she agreed, but she was looking for flaws in the argument, and quite willing to trip him up.

Then the door opened, and Bobbie bowed with exaggerated politeness. "Auntie Highbrow, telephone wants you."

Five minutes later, Drummond's excellent Swedish chauffeur was startled out of his evening smoke. And thirty minutes later he had been dismissed by Miss Bridgman, with the information that she would not be home till morning.

They were sitting together — Edith and Elsie — on the couch in Elsie's front room, and their arms were intertwined as completely as the mechanics of the situation would permit.

"I've read that personal every day for nine days and I just couldn't stand it any longer."

"I'm terribly glad that you couldn't."

"He's a foreigner, Edith. And enough like Marie to be her brother."

"Most of us are foreigners. Has he gone back home?"

"Yes, he went yesterday."

Elsie disengaged her left hand and held it before Edith's eyes. "You see, I haven't disgraced you. That ring is as real as anybody's."

Another kiss, ending with a sigh of relief. "I'm not heroic, Elsie. I was perfectly certain you had no ring, and I couldn't make up my idiot mind whether to blame you or not."

"Now don't you scold yourself, Edith Bridgman. I've just been living on your convictions."

"Why, didn't he want to marry you?"

Elsie laughed. "It was too funny. I had refused to promise you, and he had refused to promise a man friend of his. But we talked about you — and wanted to please you both. We — we knew you two were older. Where do you think we met?"

"At a socialist meeting, of course."

"No! At a dance hall."

"Elsie Shaviro Somebody, I'm ashamed of you. I must kiss you again to prove it."

"Thank you, ma'am. If I can't be kissed by my husband, you are the next best. But I was desperate, Edith. I didn't care what I did. And I went one evening, and it made me sick. There wasn't a decent man or girl in the place. I was standing to one side when he came through the gate and took a look. I said

to myself, Who are you, my young Napoleon Bonaparte? Then something slid up to him and spoke to him. He reached out his finger and touched her lips. 'Well,' he said, 'I might get some on my face.' She slapped him on the cheek and she said, 'You're no gentleman.' He moved his head up and down and said, 'You have Browning pistol of eye, kiddo. You have shot me up for fair.' She giggled and took him by the arm. 'Maybe you don't think I'm onto you. Browning is a poet. Do you think I've got some eyes?' He looked sober right away. Then he said, 'When I monkey with slang, it sometimes turns out buzz-saw. I mean you shoot straight when you say I am no gentleman; but you, kiddo, are just poor pitiful she configuration of élan vital. Now go away quick.' She looked at him, and moved off. Then he took out his handkerchief and wiped his forehead, and saw me looking at him."

Elsie stopped, evidently lingering over a happy moment.

"Who spoke first?"

"He did. He walked straight up to me, and he said, 'Miss Eyeglasses, I want to dance. I do not know anybody. My name is Saadi.' I said, 'My name is Elsie, and I want to dance, too.' We moved out on the floor, and we danced till we reeled. I don't think we said one word. We had been waiting for each other a thousand years."

"Didn't you even discuss élan vital?"

"No. It was weeks before I understood. I didn't even know it meant vital impulse. And I had never seen the word 'Saadi' before. That's a Persian word."

"Yes. Persian and Jewess! It's a real romance."

"He isn't exactly a Persian, though he speaks Persian as perfectly as you speak English. He comes from Bokhara. It wouldn't have made any difference if he had

come from the North Pole. He's the noblest man that ever lived."

Edith reached out her foot and touched the magnificent red rug. "You evidently know about Bokhara now. That's a beauty."

"Isn't it! He ransacked the whole town for eastern things. That coffee set over there, with the cunning little cups and the long curving brass spout, came from Bosnia. He knows all about the Balkans. Oh, maybe I haven't learned things!"

"It's hard to take it all in, Elsie. Does your mother know? Were you married by the rabbi?"

"My folks know all about it now. Mother was here to see me this morning. She can't get over the fact that I was married by a justice of the peace, but she's taking it pretty well. My father is tickled to death that it isn't worse. He telephoned me about an hour ago that Moslem is a whole lot better than Monzerim."

"I'm sure it is, Elsie. But 'monzerim' is beyond me."

"It means illegitimates, Edith. Mother — mother explained to me this morning why I've been so miserable lately."

She hid her face on Edith's breast, and the scarred hand held the dark head close. "Bless your dear heart, girlie! Bless your dear heart."

Elsie clung to her — crying a little — tears of joy. "Just think, Edith — just think — my dream will come true. It is sure to be a boy."

"A fighter for the workers," murmured Edith. "Have you seen a doctor?"

"No."

"Will you let me send you one?"

"I'll do anything you say. I want everything to be all right." She lifted her face and brushed away the happy tears. "I want my boy to be strong and beautiful, like his father."

She arose and brought a photograph, and Edith studied it. "It is a very unusual face, Elsie. But what long eyes, looking out of the corners. Did you never mistrust him the least bit?"

"Never! His simplest word — why, I'd take my husband's word against all the bibles in the world. He was always joking, and I did enjoy it so, for I could never make a joke. But when Saadi says he'll do a thing, he'll do it even if the sky tumbles down. Yes, and if it tumbled down, he'd catch the birds on his shoulder and pet them."

"Does he know who's coming?"

Elsie shook her head. "He never dreamed. And I can't telegraph him, because I don't know what steamer he is taking to-morrow. But he will be the gladdest man in Asia when he gets my letter. If I may see your doctor to-morrow, I'll write to-morrow night. Who is your doctor, Edith?"

Edith hesitated. "Bobbie had a specialist. But I will send you our family physician, Dr. Rowland. I'll telephone when he can come, and you can have your mother here to meet him. But for goodness' sake, don't wait about writing. Do it now, and I'll mail it when I go out in the morning."

"All right. But I must go to my bedroom to write, all by my little self."

And away she went. She was gone for fifteen minutes, while Edith availed herself of the opportunity to pull her wits together, and study the face of Elsie's husband. Something about the brow made her think of Trench. But there was no resemblance to the doctor's clear, steady gaze. Presently Elsie returned, radiant at a good task performed, and placed in Edith's hands the letter, addressed to Mr. Saadi Sereef, Grand Hotel, Tashkent, Turkestan, Russia. Edith put it in her handbag, and they sat down together again.

"Oh, I'm so happy," sighed Elsie. "And it is so

nice to feel that I can pay the doctor. My husband is rich — that is, he seems rich to me after what I've gone through. He left me five hundred dollars in gold, and I've got a bank account. His father is some sort of nobleman. They call him a Beg."

"Oh!" exclaimed Edith. "Perhaps that is why he is so much interested in politics."

"Perhaps. I'm making a big scrapbook of the clippings he collected, though I can't read half of them. He had a dozen foreign papers sent here, and he'd sit over there and use the shears, and sort of rub his teeth together in tune with them. I can tell you just how much every nation in the world spent on its navy last year. I can tell you the gold reserve in every capital. Saadi is the most practical revolutionist I ever met."

"I inferred as much, my dear. You said he was like Marie. But I supposed Marie to be very poor."

"That's true, but lots of revolutionist girls are rich, Edith, and of noble blood. Saadi is the son of a nobleman, but he was in the Russian revolution. As soon as he gets to Tashkent he is going to take a hand in politics again. I don't know just what he's going to do. It is dangerous, but I told him I would be ashamed of him if he didn't do his duty. I'm not worrying. Nothing will happen to him — he's too full of resources. And some day he will probably be prime minister of Bokhara, for he is a great friend of the present Emir."

Edith caught her breath. A terrible suspicion was slowly forcing the door of her heart, as the veiled figure in Watts's picture forces its way past the broken-winged love.

Elsie did not notice her agitation. "And then," continued the girl, "we shall go to Bokhara to live, and I shall be a great lady. Wouldn't that make you smile, Edith Bridgman? From Ischl's clothing fac-

tory to the palace of Kerminéh! But there shall be no nonsense. Saadi and I are both radicals, though he hasn't much faith in Marx, and we'll make things hum in Central Asia."

Edith fought the dreadful sinking sensation within her. She rose and moved round the room, examining here a picture and there a vase, with little mechanical exclamations, as of pleasure. Elsie rose and joined her, and took her through all the rooms of the flat. Had the girl been already a princess in Bokhara, she could have shown no more pride in her palace. Gradually her friend recovered herself. Whatever her doubts, this was not the time to disclose them.

They returned to the front room. "Oh, it's so good to think that you're going to stay all night. Saadi wasn't here more than half the time. He is studying medicine, and couldn't let on to his friends that he was married."

More darkness spreading across the horizon, but Edith held her peace, and sent up a little prayer for a level head.

"And now, Edith dear, don't let's talk any more for a while, but have some music. It's a perfectly splendid instrument, and I'm going to play you the first two pieces he brought me. You see, I took a little room by myself right after I first met him, and he had the instrument sent there. That was when you lost track of me. If I had known you a little better, I'd have had you come and chaperon me, but I always thought of you as with me, dear beautiful woman."

A lump rose in Edith's throat, and down went her head on Elsie's shoulder, as if she were begging forgiveness for something. But when Elsie presently proceeded to play Korsakoff's "Scherazade," and then Bird's "Oriental Sketch," sorrow returned. She understood only too well how the spell of enchantment had fallen upon Elsie in those first days. The man

had technically respected her unprotected condition, but he had led her into a fool's paradise with that subtle, jasmine-sweet music. As the strains ceased, Edith felt that Elsie was very unlikely to see her husband again.

"You say he has gone to Bokhara, dear. What called him home? Was it the politics?"

"I didn't quite say he had gone to Bokhara. Didn't you notice the address I wrote on the letter? Tashkent was his mother's home, and it is about fifteen hours' ride from Bokhara. His mother has died, and he has to go."

"Does her dying make any difference to his prospects?"

"Yes. Saadi gets all her money. The poor little socialist girl is going to have money to burn."

"Why didn't his mother live in Bokhara?"

"There was some trouble. She was separated from her husband. Saadi didn't seem to think much of his father, but what do I care, so long as he thinks the whole world of me?"

She sprang up and brought a half dozen new records, each in its brown paper cover. "Select something more to play, Edith. Oh, here's the thing. This is the Servian national song, 'Rise, Servians, Rise.' It makes you rise all right. Listen!"

She slipped the record into place, and the sprightly military music began. She swayed to it. She began to march alertly through the room. "You should have seen us do this together! He knew the words, and we used to march up and down till the people below rapped on the steam-pipe and we had to be good.—What's the matter, Edith? Don't you like such things Sunday evening? I always forget that you're a Christian."

Edith smiled, at least with her lips. "I suppose I'm tired. I didn't have any supper. Will you make me a cup of tea?"

"Will I? I'm awful to forget a thing like that. Why, you poor little rich girl, I've got an ice box full of goodies for you. And we'll have supper right away. No—you aren't going to help. You sit right there and look at the new records, and pick out something for a tired girl. There's a lovely one over there somewhere—the last he brought me. It's called 'Good night, little girl, good night,' but I haven't played it since he went, for it makes me cry."

Elsie disappeared into the kitchen, and Edith sat perfectly still, gazing at the Bokhara rug, which was red as if with old blood.

Son of a prince—medical student—clandestine marriage—prime minister—dead mother—heir to fortune! It was all a clear case of humbug and treachery. Little had Helena guessed how truly Edith would have to "specialise in desertion."

Elsie's voice rang out from the kitchen. "Why don't you play it?"

"In a minute," answered Edith. She shuffled the records and found the one desired. She took it out and carried it to the instrument and set it in place, though it looked like a great thin passover cake, the charred symbol of Elsie's sacrifice. A rich baritone began to sing, "I've told you the story you asked me to tell." A father was giving his little daughter a good-night blessing. Edith listened grimly.

"The world is so wide, dearie,
True friends are so rare, dearie,
Who knows what danger may wait for you there!
No matter how well we have guarded the fold,
The wolves will come in somewhere.
But rest you and slumber, and dream if you will,
You're safe 'this night, I know—"

She shuddered as the tender words were breathed. To have given Elsie that song as a farewell gift was a bit of oriental cruelty worthy of Satan himself. She

slowly clenched her hands, and became aware that one of them was holding the slip from which she had taken the record.

As she smoothed out the heavy brown paper, she extracted from it a piece of lighter colour, apparently the memorandum of sale. No — no! What stared at her! She had a quick eye for that word of words.

Cetinje, April 15, 1914.

Saadi Sereef Dr. Trench, Halsted St., Chicago.
bsvd

MOHAMMED BEG.

It was but the work of an instant to get to her hand-bag and hide the paper within it. She had no qualm of conscience. She had only a queer little jumble of hope and confidence.

"The needle's off," sang Elsie in the distance, and so it was, rasping its way toward the pin at the centre. Edith pushed the little lever, lifted the arm, inserted a new needle, tossed the record to the couch, and restored the Servian piece. She lifted her head and marched down the hall to the kitchen.

"That's the stuff, Edith. Why, your cheeks are red as fire, and your eyes are snapping like electricity."

"I could dance," said Edith. "I'll put on The Blue Danube, and we'll take a turn in the kitchen."

"You won't find anything about the Danube in *my* records, thank you. Saadi hates the Austrians, and my family doesn't love them any too well. Father was born in Galicia."

"I was only joking, dear. Dr. Rowland wouldn't let you dance. How good everything looks. Let's eat in the kitchen."

"Not much! You've got to see all the pretty things I have."

"And not one from me among them!"

"How do you know? Saadi and I had no end of

fun buying our own wedding presents. I bought for all my friends, and he did the same. I have presents from Mr. Wu, and Mr. Becker, and Mr. Chatterjee, and Mr. Deland, and Mr. Ameen, and Dr. Trench."

"Indeed? Dr. Trench is the man who attended Bobbie."

"Well, now, Edith, what do you know about that! Isn't that the funniest coincidence? He is the man whom Saadi refused to promise."

"Have you met him, Elsie?"

"Goodness, no. Don't you understand that nobody knows but you and my folks?"

Edith went back to stop the whirling record, and presently returned.

"What did Dr. Trench give you — by proxy?"

"The loveliest set of blue china, just like his own. And that pigeon's-blood vase that I showed you was from Mr. Wu, and the samovar is from Mr. Becker, and the ivory paper-cutter like lacework is from Mr. Chatterjee. Mr. Ameen is a Persian, and he gave me the silk spread for my table in the sitting-room — only he doesn't know it. This" — Elsie waved aloft an aluminum frying-pan — "is from Mr. Deland. Saadi says I must call it a spider, 'because that is what Yankee boy calls it.'"

"And did I really give you something?"

"Yes, Edith, a book. Saadi and I read the last part of it together. I told you I wouldn't take a dare, and I didn't. We laughed ourselves sick over some of the things, but Saadi took a great fancy to that third of John. I told him that a friend of mine called it the boldest thing ever written, and he said he'd be damned if it wasn't. Up to that time Saadi's favourite author was Haeckel, but he said that Haeckel was insaner than Jesus. It seems that Haeckel wants the southern Slavs wiped out to make room for German culture."

Edith listened with amazement, but without losing

her sense of impending disaster. "Where is that book, dearie?"

"In my bedroom. Saadi used to read it there."

Edith went into the bedroom and found a thin Oxford bible. Her own card was in it, and she now remembered giving her card to Elsie that first day at the factory. Deeply touched, she turned the pages and found a certain place.

Then she went back to the kitchen. "I should never have given you that; you know that I wouldn't; but I've marked a place in it — one that your people love as much as mine do. It just says, 'As thy days, so shall thy strength be.'"

XXVII

WEDNESDAY morning Edith telephoned to Dr. Rowland while Elsie was getting breakfast. He not only made an appointment for ten o'clock, but volunteered to go with his car and bring Mrs. Shaviro to Elsie's flat.

After breakfast, Edith called up Trench, not without a tremor.

"This is Miss Bridgman, Dr. Trench. — So am I to hear yours. I want to consult you concerning a friend of mine. Can I see you this afternoon at your office? — Thank you very much — three will be just right."

And at three she was there. Chatterjee let her in, and she told him she had seen him at the University, at the Tagore lecture. She introduced herself, learned his name, and hoped that they might see more of each other. This pleased him immensely, and in his shy, quiet way, he asked her if she had liked Mr. Tagore when he spoke about union with nature, or some such thing.

"So much, Mr. Chatterjee, that sometime I want to ask you many questions. Just now the doctor is expecting me."

Chat disappeared into the inner office, and did not reappear, having another way of exit thence. Trench came through into the library and held out only one hand, though the impulse to extend both was strong.

"It is a very great pleasure to see you here, Miss Bridgman. I lack training in the amenities, as you know only too well, but Mrs. Jamison had a name for you. Do you recall it?"

"I'm afraid I do. And it is distinctly nice of you

to imply that I brighten the room. When you hear what I've come about, you will want to call me Evening Cloud."

"Or some such thing!" said Trench.

"Or some such thing," she echoed. "He's delightful — Mr. Chatterjee is delightful. One can see that he's had bringing up."

"You could say that of all the fellows around me here — even of one who has just left us, having scarred us all with frank speech. And now come into my sanctum."

He led the way, and closed the door. She stood looking at the Della Robbia — that dearest one of the sculptured babies of the Spedalie degli Innocenti. It had the intimacy of famous things — it seemed like Trench's own child.

"You called this room sanctum," she said, "and you have that exquisite little fellow always before you, like something sacred."

"Please sit down, Miss Bridgman. You are already tossing me a challenge, for 'sacred' is a word that belongs to a past age. I don't suppose there is an animal or a plant that hasn't been sacred."

"And *I* don't suppose," she retorted, "that there *are* any past ages. Aren't the confidences that pass in this office sacred?"

"I hope so."

"And aren't the relations of men and women sacred?"

"Yes, subject to reason."

"It is not the first time in the history of the world, Dr. Trench, that an idolater has transferred sacredness from persons to reason. Do you find that reason carries you far in considering the relations of men and women?"

"No," said Trench, perceiving that she had acquired resources since last he talked with her.

Edith smiled at his docility. "I don't really need to quiz you like this, because I know how good you are. I know that your bark is a thousand times worse than your bite. I have been trying very hard this winter to be impersonal."

"Why should you, my dear lady? Don't become a negation like me."

"Being," said Edith, in as sepulchral a tone as she could command, "myself a mere atom. Little you know, my dear Dr. Trench, how far behind the times you are in astrophysics. An atom is as complicated a thing as the planet Saturn, and looks like it, with its ring of electrons. In fact, it reminds me of you and your boys, and I shall address you on that subject on the twenty-eighth of June, in connection with potential energy."

"Heavens!" ejaculated Trench. "Does that appointment really hold?"

"Hold! It holds like a non-Euclidean equation. For ten in the morning, sir, in the conservatory. I'm preparing a lecture which will last till Sunday dinner, and take the place of church."

"I'll be there," cried Trench, "in spite of all the babies in Chicago."

"Good! And now to my errand. Do you remember my using the words 'impersonal passion'?"

"I'm not likely to forget it, while life lasts."

"And sending me to Ischl's?"

"Yes. I apologise."

"There is no need of apology. I went, and made the acquaintance of two girls. One was Italian and one was Jewish. Soon afterward the Jewish girl married, and that is what I have come to consult you about. Her husband is not with her now, and I am terribly afraid that he has deserted her."

Trench nodded. "The old story. Desertion gives the charities more trouble than everything else except

alcohol. But the law can do something, and I will help you take the proper steps."

"I'm afraid the law can't help us. The man has gone to Russia."

"That is unusual, and makes it worse. Is she very anxious to get him back?"

"No, because she is sure he will return. She is desperately in love, and trusts him completely. But I feel very certain that she has seen the last of him."

"In that case, the best thing to do is to do nothing — not even to destroy her faith. She will come to believe him dead and send him to the heaven of Jewish heroes."

Edith smiled demurely. "It isn't every woman, then, who has to be told the truth?"

"No."

"I had hoped," she said, "that you had some friend in Russia who might be asked to find the man and reason with him. I should be very glad to pay such a friend's expenses."

Trench shook his head. "Reason doesn't go far in these cases — as you just now reminded me. The best thing is to let the girl go back into the factory. Is she a person of any intelligence?"

"Dr. Trench, this girl is above the average. She is my superior."

"What type physically? Heavy?"

"No — more like a flame."

Trench knotted his brow. "The man whom she loves must be above the average also. Very likely the Jewish type of Russian intellectual. Is there any reason, however, why the girl should not return to the factory?"

"Yes, Dr. Trench. If you don't mind, will you call up Dr. Rowland, and tell him that I am here, and ask him about my friend whom he saw this morning?"

The doctor took up the telephone, got the number,

and began to talk. "Good morning, doctor. This is Trench. Miss Bridgman is here, speaking to me about a case in which she is interested. It is the young woman whom you saw this morning. She wants me to know the facts and the prospects."—He listened for two or three minutes.—"Yes.—Yes.—October. All right, and thank you. Good-bye."

"Dr. Rowland reports everything in fine shape, and is much impressed with the girl. He called her Elsie."

"Yes, that's her name. Elsie Serceef."

"Serceef!"

"Exactly, Dr. Trench. She is the wife of your student."

It is not appointed to many men in a life-time to be so surprised. He had thought that nothing in Saadi could surprise him, but he seemed to be listening to incredible bad news about — himself.

But Trench took it in characteristic fashion. He sat in silence for three minutes, while his mind retraced Saadi's history swiftly, omitting little and neglecting nothing. Then he took another minute to consider the future, while his gaze seemed fastened on the little picture that Arschiak had given him. She followed his gaze and saw with a start what the picture was. At the end of four minutes Trench unknotted his brow, looked up, apologised, and reached out for the picture.

"Do you remember the scene?"

"I'm not likely to forget it, while life lasts," she quoted. "Just about there"—she touched the foreground—"I wondered whether either of us would ever see land again."

Trench put the painting back. "My boy Saadi," he said, "will be glad to know that he is to be a father. I will wire his steamer immediately."

"You poor innocent — you poor Della Robbia innocent wrapped in swathing bands!"

"Delightful epithet," said Trench.

"Why, doctor, is it possible that you think this adventurer cares a rap about Elsie? It is the most terrible example of — impersonal passion."

"Appearances are against him, Miss Bridgman, but I have faith in Saadi."

"Why? How is it possible?"

"If I tell you the truth, you will think me the most arrogant animal that walks."

"Well, tell me the truth. I seem to be the person for whom you reserve it."

"I trust Saadi because he is so much like myself. He has no God, no standards, no anything."

She checked her quick tongue, determined that this time she would not make the old mistake. "You mean something, my friend. Your confidence in this Mr. Sereef is entirely personal?"

"Yes. Personal is the word. Saadi came here with despair in his heart and strange oaths on his lips. He called himself strictly selfish, and warned me that he would seduce some girl if he saw fit. It was an attempt to be honest with himself in the midst of cowardice and hypocrisy. All the autumn he sang the praises of war — war being to him the honest expression of human nature. But a change came over him. On the fifteenth of last month he told me that he had been reading the New Testament."

"Yes. His wife tells me that they read it together."

"Ah, that completes the chain. Saadi reverted to the ideals of Christianity, exactly as if he had Christian blood in him. He regarded them as wild dreams, but resigned himself."

"Resigned himself!"

"Yes. And I know exactly how he felt. I am now quite ready to admit the importance of certain ideals — the importance of certain illusions, if you please."

"That subject, Dr. Trench, is reserved for the twen-

ty-eighth of June. But you are ready to admit that Mr. Sereef's marriage vow is sacred?"

"Quite ready."

"Then will you not appeal to him to respect it?"

"I shall be glad to wire him that the child is coming. I don't feel called upon to lecture him."

"I wish," said Edith, "oh, I do wish that I could share your confidence in him. But you have surely been deceived. His whole tale about Bokhara is a tissue of lies."

"I confess that I can't prove the contrary."

"Doctor, do you think that this man has any sense of obligation toward you?"

Trench studied the lake scene again. "Saadi once said to me that he would answer when I called."

"Then call, Dr. Trench! Call him back! Don't let him sail."

"He would not return."

"Ah! You confess it."

"Miss Bridgman, Saadi is going out of a sense of duty to his fellow countrymen."

"Pooh! I'd let all his countrymen hang for Elsie's sake."

She said it with emphasis. Her Easter vision, which had grouped all men as those about Trench, had fled.

Trench looked very grave. "Mrs. Potter said to me that she would let all the Indians in the world die for Mildred's sake. But she did not mean it."

Edith flushed. "I suppose that Mrs. Potter and I are petty and personal. We love the persons we know."

"Saadi," said Trench, "loves those whom he doesn't know."

"I'm afraid you are hopeless, doctor. You are sentimentalising a scoundrel who has no more sense of duty than a machine. *Why* is he going back? *Why*?"

"Because," said Trench with a slow sweet smile, "those about us are those about us."

She was silent, wondering at the strange, vague words.—Trench drew up a pad of paper, and began to write a telegram. Edith laid a hand on his arm.

"If you are wiring Mr. Sereef, please wait a minute. I don't want him to have a week on shipboard to think about it, and cover up his tracks as soon as he lands. I don't want him to have information without personal influence."

"I will do as you say, Miss Bridgman, but you are taking a great responsibility."

"Then I'll take it. I have a great notion to pack my trunk and follow him myself. But I don't know him. I should have no weight with him."

Trench tore up the telegram, and waited for her to go on.

"Doctor, let us suppose that this man is not really bad at heart. I think he is, but let us suppose not. But if he is even faltering in his allegiance to Elsie, he needs personal influence brought to bear upon him. Isn't there some one over there who could go to him as your proxy? Some one who is true and tried, and knows you both?"

Trench smiled and answered lightly. "There is my good friend Jaffer. Dr. Jaffer is true and tried, and he knows about Saadi, though he doesn't know him personally."

"That would be fine, if Dr. Jaffer lives in Constantinople, or anywhere near the Balkans."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean this!" She drew the cable message from her handbag.

Trench took it and read it.

Cetinje, April 15, 1914.

Saadi Sereef Dr. Trench, Halsted St., Chicago.

bsvd

MOHAMMED BEG.

"Cetinje, eh? This looks as if he may have gone to Montenegro."

"And that fact does not disturb you, after his saying that he was bound for Central Asia to claim a fortune?"

"Not in the least, dear lady."

Edith, abashed, was silent. She could only reflect to herself what a power the man would be if he could trust God as he trusted the children of Satan! But he suddenly seemed boyish as he sat there smiling, and her love went out to him with a touch of maternal pity.

"I have always thought of you as so critical, so inclined to discount everybody and everything. You have talked of men and women as if they were helpless animals. I can't exactly call it cynicism — but I guess I will, because I've ruled out every other word. And now you are out of character!"

"Dr. Bridgman's diagnosis," laughed Trench, "is differential and accurate. Poor Saadi is not in the same class with you. He sized me up as no cynic, and therefore as marriageable. It is sad to see a personal bias in so young a physician. But I suppose you're dying to know what these mystic and melodramatic letters mean. Excuse me if I seem graceless — but they remind me of a certain brand of underwear."

"I suppose I shall have to excuse it, but you can't blame me for desperate curiosity when my Elsie's whole life may hang upon those letters. I did venture to think that some of your students could see some light in them."

Trench took up the telephone, and glanced at his watch.—"This is Dr. Trench.—I want to speak to Mr. Ameen. You will find him in 36, preparing some sections. I will hold the wire.—Is that you, Ameen? — I want to ask you an odd question. Do the letters *bsvd* suggest anything to you in Persian or Arabic? Yes, *bsvd*. Think about it a minute, and call me

up. Consider names of cities, common phrases, Moslem proverbs — anything that enters your mind."

"I'm afraid," said Trench, as he hung up, "that Ameen can't help us."

"Pardon my saying so, doctor, but you don't give him all the data. He doesn't know that these words are addressed to Mr. Sereef."

"No, but that's just what I don't want him to know. Ameen is prejudiced in Saadi's favour."

"Perhaps you are right. It now occurs to me that a message from the Balkans might be couched in some Balkan language."

"Yes, Miss Bridgman. And there is one friend of mine who might be of assistance if he were here. He is Dr. Yukitch, a Southern Slav whom I knew at Vienna. But I have no idea where he is. Ah — there is Ameen."

As he took up the receiver and listened, Trench began to smile and to make notes on the pad of paper. He wrote for several minutes, laughed, told Ameen that he was a wonder, and hung up.

"Ameen gives us a wide choice, Miss Bridgman. For Persian he suggests three sentences, all beginning with the required letters. They are *Beya shuma va damad* — You come, and son-in-law; *Boro shuma va damad* — You go, and son-in-law; *Barayi shuma vajibest dalcel* — You must have a guide. For Arabic he gives us three others, and in one case the inner meaning which so many Arabic words bear. They are: *Bismillah salimho va dalilho* — In God's name greet him and show him the way; *Balad shams va dobab* — Land of sun and mist — that is to say, Land of trouble and strong government; and finally, *Basd Saadi vadie Doctor* — After Saadi kill the doctor."

Troubled though she was, Edith burst into laughter. "I guess that he thinks I am here trying to kill you

both. Well, I won't. I give up trying to find out the meaning of bsvd."

Trench handed the yellow paper back. "I suppose I feel about Saadi as you feel about God. I've got to trust him, because I can't check him up."

Edith took the paper, hesitated, and placed it again in the doctor's hand. "Send it to Dr. Jaffer," she said.

Trench slowly folded the paper. "You are quite serious?"

"Quite serious. It was you who sent me to Ischl's. Elsie is our ward."

Trench opened a drawer and glanced at his check book. "It will inconvenience me a little."

She laid a hand on his arm. "Dr. Trench, you must let me pay Dr. Jaffer's expenses."

"That would take too much explaining. I am sorry to be short, however. You see, I lent Saadi a thousand."

Edith opened her eyes very wide. This man, this ideal of cautious commonsense, was a lunatic. But she held her peace.

"Joint guardians, eh," continued Trench. "I'm not sure that we are the only ones." He turned to the telephone book, found a number, and asked for it. "Is this you, Mr. Ischl? This is Dr. Trench. Is your car there? Could you spare the time to run round to my office?"

While they were waiting, Trench took from a drawer an album of pictures of Encampment, and together they seemed to tread again the cedar woods. "Not Encampment," she said, "but Enchantment."

Presently in came Ischl, a little uncertain in his flat-footed tread, and thinner than of yore. He had a reeking cigar in his fingers, but, seeing a lady present, made an effort to quench it and hide it.

"Miss Bridgman, this is Mr. Ischl."

"I've heard of you, Mr. Ischl. Your stock went up with your employé's last summer."

Ischl strove to hide his embarrassed pleasure. "Twan't my doing. This man here is responsible. You don't know all my family history, and I ain't here to tell it. But I had a damned hard time to make Dr. Trench do something for me. And now, doc, what can Ischl do for you?"

"Mr. Ischl, you've a little girl named Elsie."

"Yes, thank God, I have."

"Well, it was Miss Bridgman who interceded for Elsie. Do you remember what you said to me about some other girls?"

"Well, I guess I said a good many things. It was a warm morning. But I remember I says, doc, I says, there's others named Elsie."

"That's it. And do you remember Elsie — what was her last name, Miss Bridgman?"

"Shaviro."

"Sure, doc. Best forewoman I ever had. Got a head on her like a man. She ain't been with me in close to five months."

"She's in trouble, Ischl."

"Damned sorry to hear it. Some man do her dirt?"

"Miss Bridgman fears so. The man has gone to Europe, and we want to find him and make him support her — if it's necessary to make him."

"I'll sit in with you on that deal. Is it money you want?"

"Yes."

"I've got my check book right here. I stuck it in my pocket when I heard it was you. God damn it — excuse me, lady, but I got to swear — I hoped the time would come when you'd need that thousand."

"Too much, Ischl. Make it five hundred. I don't myself feel sure that I ever earned a dollar in my life, but I'll take that much and thank you."

"You'll take a thousand. I'm it, this time, and I ain't lost no money this winter. There! There you are, and I hope you'll find y'ur quitter. Any time you need a little more for them as needs it, I guess maybe I could cough up if I tried hard. And there's one thing more I want to say. This lady here done a fine thing when she let my girl come first. I won't never forget it, Miss Bridgman."

He laid the check on the desk, shook hands, and was gone.

Edith opened her handbag again, but this time it was for her handkerchief. "You wonderful man," she said, wiping her eyes.

Trench was the least bit tremulous himself as he replied. "Mr. Ischl very properly thinks you the wonderful one. The deeds of Drummond and Ischl read like a fairy story. But it is certain enough that some ideals do get realised."

"How soon will you telegraph to Dr. Jaffer?"

"In ten minutes."

Trench drew up a pad of paper, and wrote.

Rasul Rahim Jaffer,
Peshawar, India.

Chicago, April 22, 1914.

Please proceed Tashkent Grand Hotel inform Saadi child expected October should cable Elsie intention of returning. Am cabling expenses.

TRENCH.

"Will that do?"

"It is fine. But is it strong enough? Won't you insert 'quickly'?"

"All right. 'Please proceed quickly.'"

"And is 'should return' strong enough? Won't you say 'must return'?"

Trench reflected. "'Should' seems to me better, but I am glad to defer to your judgment. It now reads:

"Please proceed quickly Tashkent Grand Hotel inform Saadi child expected October must cable Elsie intention of returning. Am cabling expenses."

"That is splendid, Dr. Trench. Splendid! And you are splendid to do this for Elsie. I shall sleep in peace to-night."

Then she took out Elsie's letter to Saadi, and wrote on it *Aux soins de Dr. Jaffer*, and departed. She posted the letter and went home happy, having missed a day at the University.

Trench bestirred himself to get five hundred dollars after banking hours. Anybody else would have left that part of the work till next day. But he happened to know the name of Jaffer's bank in Peshawar, and he gathered from one Halsted merchant and another till he had the required sum. By half-past four the message had gone, and by six the money.

At dinner Trench was somewhat preoccupied. He had no intention of telling the boys that Saadi was married, but he greatly desired to know whether Saadi had ever dropped any word about acquaintances in Tashkent. Luck was with him, and he was spared the need of questioning. Chat, the quietest of men, was full of a certain charming experience and had to tell of it.

"Wu, I have the honour of the acquaintance of a great lady, such as we call a *burra mem*. She must be one of what Americans call the four hundred, a—" he stopped. It had occurred to him that he had been guilty of a breach of manners.

"Well," said Wu, "what is the rest?"

"Nothing, Wu. I do not wish to make a break or some such thing."

Trench smiled. "He is showing a fine professional spirit, Wu. The lady is probably a Miss Bridgman who was here this afternoon. Finish the sentence, Chat."

"I have forgotten it."

"The phrase," said Wu, "was four hundred, a—. A very curious phrase. It belongs in Tashkent."

"What's that?"

"Gospitalnaya, 400a. It is the address of a specialist in filaria. Prince Saadi gave me the numero."

Trench said no more, but rested on that slender accident. Before he slept he wrote a letter to Jaffer, instructing him to call at Gospitalnaya, 400a, as soon as he arrived in Tashkent. Also he enclosed the Cetinje telegram. Perhaps Jaffer could think of some more odd sentences like Ameen's.

That night he lay awake for hours, living over the events of the afternoon, and never once did it occur to him that his brain was repeating them like a machine. If he had loved her with all his heart before, he loved her beyond measure now, for his heart seemed suddenly to have dilated. As he dozed off, he saw no reason why he should not ask her to marry him. And then, rousing himself with great effort, he said to himself that moments of emotional expansion must not be allowed to interfere with long settled convictions grounded in reason.

He would try to think of her impersonally. A woman was only a light and hollow endoskeleton, cancellated for the attachment of muscles; a somatic envelope of certain germ cells; a creature of osmosis; a bag of sols and gels; a cluster of reflexes; a bunch of tropisms. But — he was calling her names! Such terms St. Anthony would have used, had he known them. Such terms a jealous husband might employ in his absurdest outbursts.

A modern man, frankly recognising the facts of sex, must be more courteous. He would grant her exquisite, with adjustments more delicate than those of ions, and pressures more subtle than those of light. But it was no go. She refused to be a mechanism. She declined to be reduced to her lowest terms. She remained Edith, and doubly dear.

Well, he could not formulate all those old arguments

every time nature thrilled in him. He could only remember that the arguments were there and not to be disregarded, save at his peril.

At his peril. At his peril. But Trench was asleep — like a soldier on the picket line.

XXVIII

IN the morning he awoke to find the sunlight lying white upon his bed. It did not suggest, as it often had suggested, an incandescent shroud in a crematory retort. But of what, then, did it remind him? Why, snow, of course. Snow on the mountains. Snow on the Himalayas, beneath the shadow of which Jaffer had already read his wire. The difference of time was such that it was Jaffer's afternoon — say two o'clock. What was Jaffer doing? Did the snow on the Himalayas chill him, or did it beckon him to adventure? The latter, he hoped. After all, why grow old without a little adventure?

He sprang out of bed like a boy, took his bath like a boy, plunged into the study of his daily appointments like a boy. He found himself whistling a tune — it was years since he had whistled. And on searching his memory to see what the tune was, he discovered to his vast amusement that it was called "Precious Jewels."

At six o'clock he went out to breakfast, and there, instead of merely Wu and Chat, he found all five students. There were roses on the table, and a pile of parcels at his place.

"Many happy returns of the day, doctor!" It was Deland, thrusting a lean hand forward for a deadly Y. M. C. A. shake.

"Great Scott, boys! Great — Scott! It is my birthday. I had as clean forgot it as — well, as I forget all yours."

"Thirty-two roses, doctor," said Ameen, "and here

is one to grow on." He came forward and pinned the flower in Trench's buttonhole.

Nothing like this had happened before in the Trench household. Even then Trench did not understand it, though deeply moved. He did not understand that for the last six months he had been changing, hour by hour, from a friend deeply respected to a friend dearly beloved.

Edith had said that she should sleep soundly that night, and she did. But when she awoke, and began to recall the previous day, she suddenly fell to reproaching herself. She had made Trench change his message to Dr. Jaffer. She had called Mr. Sereef's story a tissue of lies, though the doctor believed it. She had failed to respect his judgment.

It is unsafe to draw up an indictment against a whole sex, but sometimes women act as Edith proceeded to act. Instead of saying to herself that the thing was done and there was an end on't, she grew more and more chagrined, and on her way back to the University stopped in Ilalsted Street to apologise. It was half-past eight, and Trench was busy with early callers, but she waited in the library. There she was surprised to find an enormous shallow vase filled with lilies of the valley.

Presently Trench appeared, with a look on his face such as she had never seen there before. But Helena Drummond had seen it; even Ischl had seen it.

"Well, this is pleasant again. Something new?"

"No, doctor, unless apologies from women are new. I want to say how ashamed I am to have been so insistent yesterday. It was atrocious for me to speak so of Mr. Sereef to the man who knows him better than any one."

Trench did not laugh. He took the scarred left hand, and gently lifted it to his lips. "All the apologies, dear lady, must come from me. A lifetime de-

voted to the task would hardly atone for the words I spoke to you last August, when you showed me your plants. Now take a look at mine."

"I have been looking at them. Some parent must have been very grateful, to send you such a field of May."

"It was not a G.P., whether grateful patient or grateful parent. It was merely my beloved scamp, Saadi Sereef. I beg you to take some of them."

He drew out a great handful, shook the drops from them, and held them out, with a look as if he were pleading for his life. She hesitated, and then pinned them at her breast. "I don't wonder that you love the scamp. Why did he leave orders for this particular flower?"

"Well, it happens to be my birthday."

"And why lilies of the valley on your birthday?"

"Some absurd symbolism connected with his stay in the Balkans. The interesting thing is that Saadi should respect any sort of symbol. He and I have long been accustomed to keep just as far away as possible from symbols, gods, poetry, and all the other vagaries of the human body."

"I see. He is a radical mechanist like yourself."

"A what?"

"A radical mechanist. Don't you recognise your proper tag?"

"I do no reading, Miss Bridgman. And as Ameen says, I am afraid of names."

"In that case I won't give you one, and perhaps you will tell me why you have been afraid of symbols."

"Because they turn into charms."

"Not nowadays."

"Yes, nowadays. Three blocks from here the Jew opens his Psalms and chooses a magic verse to guide him. This winter I saw an Italian girl tearfully marry the wrong man because he had got possession of a piece

of her neckwear. And West Siders continue to call on the empty name of God to do things that they ought to do themselves."

"But you give in about lilies of the valley?"

Again that look of pleading. "I have given in about more than lilies. Even cypripediums seem to mean a good deal to me."

Edith averted her face. After all her struggles, was she tempting the man? His restrained passion was evident in every look. She would be true to her resolve. She rose to go.

"Saadi and I," said Trench, rising, "have concluded that a good deal of the old vocabulary will have to serve. You may live to hear me speak respectfully of Christ's hæmoglobin."

"Well, doctor, I really think you're coming on."

"Thank you. I shan't come far enough to speak respectfully of immortality. Peacocks and butterflies symbolise it, but the birds eat up the insects."

"Yes, but peacocks also suggest pride, and pride keeps us straight."

"Alas," laughed Trench, "peacocks go to roost, and pride fails. You see how trivial the whole business becomes."

"Far from it!" she flashed. "The very mention of peacocks has given me what I need at this moment. I thank God very particularly for a little pride and courage."

"I shall never thank God for anything, madam. But before we quarrel, I admit your point. The essence of a charm is courage. I am inclined to think that courage is even the essence of charm."

He looked at her so directly that again she was afraid. "Are you by any chance becoming so banal as to compliment me?"

"By no means, Cypripedium."

She bit her lip, and moved a step toward the door.

"Saadi has charm," said Trench, "and egad! the essence of it is courage. Before you get to the door I shall probably admit that the blood of Christ is curative. It is a lonesome and sin-sick world, and needs salvation. I reckon that the world's blood supply unconsciously invented that sacrifice to cleanse itself and keep its courage up. You see, I am recanting as fast as possible."

Edith stopped. "You are almost human, Dr. Trench. I never guessed that you could be so open-minded and — and — vivacious."

He drove ahead rapidly. "Religion might be a good thing if folks would make it up as they go along. The fellows that invented it had a use for it. They extracted courage out of everything, even stones. Red pebbles were blessed to them. Becker tells me that in Russia a ruby will even now warm congealed blood, and Chat says that in India it heals the scars of fire."

She laughed — hesitated — and decided to risk it. "I don't know which one of us needs a ruby the most."

Instantly she regretted the words, and innocently tried to retrieve them by adding others. She only made the matter worse, for what she said was this: "I feel sure that you are really coming my way. But you are not ripe for the twenty-eighth of June."

Trench thrilled to that — the more that she meant nothing personal. He gripped his mind and made it think of the technical problem of vitalism versus mechanism. Then he looked down at her gravely.

"I shall try very hard to be ripe for the twenty-eighth."

She held out her hand. "Thank you for forgiving me. And may you have many, many happy returns of the day."

XXIX

JAFFER closed up his hospital affairs, and waited two days to receive Umar Khel's offering of tea for Dr. Trench. He knew it would be worth waiting for, and it would come exactly on the doctor's birthday. To the rich of Kabul, Umar Khel often sold teas that the Chief Commissioner in Peshawar could not afford to buy.

On Thursday, at eight in the morning, he appeared at the shop. The proprietor was on hand.

"Salaam alêkom, Umar Khel."

"Wa-alêkom salaam, Hakim Rasul. The tea has come. But be seated and try my cigarettes, for now we shall lose you to the infidels."

Jaffer had hardly complied when his little sister came running in quite out of breath, bearing an official envelope for which her mother had just signed. He took it from her, opened it, read it, and spoke. "Be at peace, little one, and say to mother that there is no bad news."

Jaffer put the message in his pocket and threw back his head, emitting a ring of smoke. This was different. The doctor had stepped into the game, and that was enough for Jaffer.

"Umar Khel, I will buy the camel of you. I am going to Kabul."

"No, Rasul. If you get past Lundi Kotal, I shall have to go to Kabul and beg your life of Habibullah."

"Not so, Umar Khel, but far otherwise. I shall be taken to Kabul for trial. At Kabul I shall send for your cousin, and he will despatch a messenger for me to Tashkent."

"Do not boast, my son. You will never get to Kabul. At evening you will eat soup with some new friend, and a new friend's soup is worse than bhang to make you sleep."

"Then I will go soupless, but I go to Kabul. Hukm hai! It is commanded."

Umar Khel spat on the ground. "These ears are deaf when an infidel commands a Moslem."

"Umar Khel, this man Trench has been to me as my father. He gave me a home when Americans turned me from the doors. I have sworn an oath. When he calls, I answer. When he thirsts, he shall have the last drop from my mushak. When he is robbed, I avenge him. When his women are betrayed, I go to hunt the jackal."

"It is an oath," said Umar Khel. "Is the foul budmash an infidel or a Moslem?"

"Moslem and infidel, O thou just one. Behold him — as he lurks even now in Kabul or Bokhara." And Jaffer drew forth the picture of Saadi.

"A cat!" exclaimed Umar Khel. "He mocks the Prophet, whose beautiful animal now springs upon his shoulder in Paradise."

"Thou hast said. Wisdom sits upon the lips of my father's friend."

The old man clapped his hands, and Amar Singh appeared.

"Bring me pen and paper, and cut the reed true, for to-day I write in Persian. I write to the Amir, and he will send the writ of Habibullah himself, permitting one Rasul Rahim Jaffer, Hakim of Peshawar, full liberty to tread any and every road in Afghanistan. And when I have finished, it shall be your duty, Amar Singh, to go to the Afghan postmaster with it, and tell him that I have lame clerks that can run faster than his dak-runners. It will madden him, and in fourteen days we shall place the writ in the doctor's hands."

Amar Singh smiled with pleasure at this confidence, and turned to depart. But Jaffer spoke.

"Wait, Amar Singh, for Jaffer waits not. I go to some friend, for my father no longer has friends. They who were his friends speak of dangers and days."

He sprang to his feet, and Umar Khel arose frowning. Both turned toward the door, and both stopped —

For there in the white sunlight stood a tall youth, well coloured and light of limb. His turban was whiter than the sunlight, and his eye darker than Umar's frown.

"Salaam alêkom, Uncle!"

There was silence for a moment. Then Umar shrieked, "I know you not! Breaker of promises! Rebellious budmash! Leave my door and go back to the whipping post."

But Abdul of Kabul smilingly stepped in, advanced, and seized his uncle's hands. "Struggle not, old man, or I shall kiss you, like a Christian."

The Kabuli laughed loud as he turned to Jaffer, still holding his uncle's wrists.

"I know thee well, Hakim. Often I have heard of my almost copy. But Jaffer is a prince to gaze upon, and I a wretched fakir. It is useless for this ancient fire to flame hot words — for look! uncle, I have the Amir's writ for all the world, and ocriti lista for Russia. He could not refuse when I mentioned our friend who returns from Leipzig a great chemist."

"Our friend can make ammunition," said Umar faintly.

"Yes, uncle! And I can make inquiries. When I get back to Kabul, I shall have information to impart."

Then silence fell upon the three men. They seated themselves, and the noiseless Amar Singh was presently setting forth more tea, more cakes, more strawberries, more cigarettes.

"When I came in," said Abdul, "you twain were parting in anger."

"I blame him not," said Umar.

"Nor I him, the aged and true," said Jaffer. "Is there in Kabul a Bokharan physician named Ali Khan?"

"Assuredly not, hakim. There are a thousand Ali Khans, but no hakim. Why do you ask?"

"Look, Abdul. This telegram is from one whose word to me is law, even as the word of the Amir is law to you. He bids me seek Tashkent, and that with the utmost haste and effort — *jitnee koshesh ho sakay kar ke ravana ho jao.*"

"And why?"

"Because a friend of Afghans has been robbed, and a woman has been betrayed."

"May I see your passport?"

Jaffer drew it forth, and Abdul examined it. "This is not good in Turkestan, but it will serve in Turkey."

Abdul calmly pocketed Jaffer's passport, and placed his Afghan writ and ocriti lista in Jaffer's hands.

Umar looked up. Umar smiled. Umar said, "I have long thought that you should visit Stamboul."

Then he turned to Jaffer. "You go as my agent to Ibrahim Ismail in Bokhara, with a trifling load of tea. I will tell you the price, and you will not take a pouhl less. Ali Khel is in Monday's kafilah now, and you will overtake him before he reaches Kabul. If you get away within three hours, you will be in Lundi Kotal to-morrow night."

"Umar Khel means to-morrow morning."

"It is bravely spoken, Rasul, but you will not be able to pass the fort. The rules are strict. You will have to halt and camp with the rest before Shadi, the jaw of the pass."

"A bad omen, Umar Khel. The man I hunt is named Saadi."

Umar thought a moment. "Nothing is ominous. The Prophet has said it. But — your camel — the Hour

— cannot endure a pinch on the ear. It makes her run — even in the dark.”

“ Enough, Umar Khel! I am the hafiz and memory of Houri’s ear.”

“ Very good. The kafila takes fourteen days to Kabul, but I have done it in six — on a she camel no better than Houri, whom Amar Singh will instantly load for you in the compound. Ali Khel goes by Kabul, Bamian, Khulm, and Balkh. You may tell him to press ahead with you. Take a gun. Take a heavy shawl to pray on and sleep in. Change your dress. I will include bajra cakes and dried fruits. There will be a mushak, but you will find water. There are cotton seed cakes for your camel. There is a small tent. I will have your customs instructions ready, in case Ali drops behind.”

He clapped his hands for his clerk, and the clerk, being instructed, brought certain Afghan monies.

“ In one Kabuli rupee there are thirteen annas, four pice. The customs will reckon at thirteen, and it is robbery, but you will not dispute them. If Ali can keep up with you, you will need no other guidance till you reach Balkh. Follow, and be careful of the steep roads at Kohak. At Balkh, be guided by breath and bone. If you are worn out, go to Termes and take the boat. Sell the camel there, and remit to me from Tashkent. If you go clear through to Bokhara with it, Ali can bring back its skin and bones. It is a week on Amu Darya to Charjui, but it is only versts one hundred and twenty-five from Charjui to Bokhara. Ali will do his best to keep up — but I see this case clearly. You will beat him to the bazaar or to Paradise.”

“ And if I fail ? ”

“ It is kismet, and Trench will pay. He is rich, or he would not ask you to undertake this thing. Is it a profit for me to send two maunds of tea to Bokhara? Is it safe for you — in spite of stolen writs and passes ?

But an oath is an oath. Go now and change your clothes, put your feringhee rags into a bundle not to exceed thirty-six pounds English, quiet your mother's fears, and be back "

Jaffer arose, and a single exclamation escaped him. " Gee whiz! "

" I do not understand, Rasul, but he that catches a Gilzai asleep has good kismet. And by Allah! as you boys stand there, I seem to see the fair full moon double! I must be drunk, like a Christian."

XXX

JAFFER went to get the money which Trench had cabled. Then he went home and said farewell to his mother, who cheered him on when she understood the situation. Finally he changed his clothes, having put all his money, together with a short pencil and some bits of paper, in a belt next to his skin. Accompanied by his father and the family servants, he set out for Umar Khel's. He looked the travelling merchant. About his middle he wore a cummerbund, on his legs the loose Afghan tombons, on his head an old turban. He carried a Martini, a good dagger, and twenty-five pounds of luggage. It cost him a pang to leave all the heavier instruments of the elegant kit which Trench had given him, but he had a half-dozen of the smaller ones.

Umar Khel handed him a wonderful lacquered canister. "I now take an interest in your Chicago friend. Present my salaams to Trench. There is mettle in the man, and in return for our help he shall help the Headman of his street. If the street have no such person charged with the execution of justice, he shall himself be that man. I hail him Hakim Trench Kilantar! In ordinary cases of seduction and outrage, let him exercise ordinary prudence by burying the offender up to the neck, and the dogs will take care of the head. In case his subordinates allow buildings to burn, let him burn the negligent inspector. Here in this paper are your instructions, written out. Mount; Rasul, mount and be off."

Jaffer was quick about it. He thrust the canister into his luggage, strapped the luggage in place, made his farewells, and mounted. The camel rose beneath

him. Enthroned there on high, he looked as fine an Afghan as any.

"Shabash, shabash!" cried Umar Khel. "Roar and be gone, for Rasul means the messenger, and the messenger of a lion is a lion. Find your jackal, skin him, and say your prayers on the skin. It is unclean, but God is merciful!"

Jaffer swung off in fine style, and they watched him till the bazaar closed behind him and he struck the road to the pass.

He urged his beast. He safely crossed the rocky plain which, in nine miles, harbours many a cutthroat. At six o'clock he reached the fort, showed his writ, was remembered as Abdul, registered as Abdul, and was allowed to join the kafila encamped beyond.

He selected a position as far on the northern outskirts of the camp as possible. He ate his supper, and listened idly to the braying of donkeys, the grumbling of camels, and the cackling of fowls. Slowly darkness fell. Jaffer lay down close to the Houri, and took a nap. When he awoke it was eight o'clock, and the sky was starry clear, and most of the motley horde about him had gone to sleep. Jaffer stretched himself, tightened his sash, reached over to Houri, and pinched her ear. The camel sprang to her feet like a billowy sea monster. Jaffer then arose and gave that ear the pinch of poverty itself. Houri did not stop to bite — she fled into the darkness, due north, with Jaffer following. A guard called out, but he got no answer.

Half an hour later Houri and hakim were well into the grim jaws of Shadi Bagiar.

Along the ravine, then into the smooth road made by the British with vast labour some seventy years before. The camel moved as securely as on a pavement, and Jaffer remembered the old legend that Asoka built a railway here. It was doubtless untrue, for Asoka — they say — is a name known to more people than ever

heard of Cæsar, and more idealised than Cæsar. Jaffer remembered what feet had marched through here. Persian, Greek, Seljuk, Tatar, Mongol, Durani — driven by unguessed forces of nature. Certainly within ten feet of him, perhaps through exactly the same space to a foot, had passed the living bodies of Alexander the Great, Ghengis Khan, Tamerlane.

He inspected the heights. In the day-time three guards should appear at every block-house as he approached. In the day-time they should present arms and watch him till he was within sight of the next. But, of course, nobody appeared. He was unguarded.

He fell to whistling — and then to whispering — “Oh, du lieber Ilalsted Street,” and plodded on as fast as his mount could go. The sky was a thin black starry strip, with a faint scimitar of silver, but Jaffer was unmoved by the night’s “illegible vast romance,” having enough to watch in this chiselled water-course of his own planet.

Hours came and went. The road slowly rose to the left, and from a little plateau Jaffer caught the gleam of a light, below, doubtless from the fort of Ali Masjid. He paused to reflect that it was midnight, and that he had ridden more than a day’s journey. He dismounted, pretty stiff, and fed the camel, which proceeded to lie down and rest. Jaffer ate a bajra cake, drank some water, and lighted a cigarette. He sat there half an hour, wrapped in his heavy shawl from the bitter night air, and so drowsy that he could hardly smoke. Then he rose and proposed to the Houri that they should proceed. The lady viciously objected, but in vain.

On and on, still westward. The road zigzagged down and ran along a cliff. The pass is very narrow here, and there is a river below, and two thousand feet of hill rise above it. The camel felt her way along, and Jaffer did no whistling.

The sky seemed less black. One by one the stars

disappeared. The valley widened a trifle, and day dawned slowly. He was on the edge of the country of the Zakka Khels, and yonder he saw a ruined Afridi watch tower. He thought he would eat some mulberries and give the Houri another rest.

Ping! Something struck into the bundle of tea on the left side. The report followed, and Jaffer reflected for a second what to do. Then he toppled gracefully and fell to the ground. His camel loped off up the pass and lay down, glad that her rider had come to his senses.

Jaffer lay still. He wondered if he had done the right thing. The only other thing would have been to advance with the camel as a shield, and that would have invited the death of his mount. Well, he had tested the safety of the pass on a guarded day, and found that it was not guaranteed so early in the morning. He had no right to complain, though he heartily wished that the Germans owned it. As for himself, he must play 'possum till the robber appeared, and then take his chances in a sudden grapple.

He reflected idly, during the next five minutes, on Umar Khel's ideas of justice. He had considerable sympathy with them, but just at present their limitations were painfully evident, for co-operation was necessary to enforce them. He earnestly desired the sound of hoof-beats of the King's Own. Hark — was that a stone, loosened by a hasty foot? He scanned the hillside as well as he could without changing position.

He saw it — a form skulking, dodging, winding down. As it came nearer, he saw that the fellow wore his lungi wrapped around his left arm, and though the arm supported a Snider, it looked stiff.

Why had the villain paused at a safe distance? Surely he must see that the Martini was lying out of Jaffer's reach. Jaffer longed for it — could imagine the "Ma-sha-Illah" engraved on it for good luck —

but he did not dare reach out. Bismillah! what was happening now? The scoundrel had turned and was making off up the hill.

Jaffer sprang to his feet, seized his rifle, and drew a bead on the retreating form. "Zakka Khel ahoy! The hill is steep. Manda na bash — may you never be weary!"

The fellow stopped, presenting a tempting back. He turned. Jaffer lowered his rifle and laid it on the ground.

"What's the matter with the arm, brother? Come down in the safety of God."

The Afridi hesitated, laid down his rifle, and descended. He took Jaffer's hand and laid it in turn upon each of his own eyes. "It was only Takrar — the Feud. I took you for my cousin."

Jaffer nodded. "I have heard. A cousin's tooth breaks on a cousin's. Did he give you that arm?"

"Yes, Agha. Early in this month of Jomhadi."

"Three weeks ago! Do you hate him?"

"Oh, no. My cousin lost three little ones in the famine. Great was their pain, but now they drink the river of milk in paradise."

"Have you seen a hakim about this arm?"

"The mullahs have prayed. It grows worse. I shall die, but in paradise I shall no longer struggle for bread. I shall shoot the pheasants and eat and be filled, and the bones will put on new plumage and fly back into the golden leaves. The mullah has told me."

"O pale son of Zakka Khel, I am hakim. I am Hakim Rasul of Peshawar."

"I kiss the foot of Hakim Rasul. Why did he spare this slave?"

"I have sworn an oath to spare the men of Zakka Khel. I have sworn the oath of *wilyati yunani* * — that I will heal friend and foe. Let me see your arm."

* Foreign medicine — the medicine of Hippocrates.

The man shook his head. "You are Daktar Sahib — a Christian."

"No."

"You are Baid — a Hindu."

"No! La illaha illa 'llaha, Muhammad-an-Rassul-Allah, Hakim Rasul rasul-o-rasulillah!" *

The man unbound the lungi and revealed a ghastly sight. Jaffer stripped off a chicken skin that was wrapped around the general disaster. Then he opened his luggage and got out his big bath sponge. "Take this down to the river and soak it."

The fellow received the sponge gingerly. "It is the little cloud. I have heard but never seen. Hakim Rasul has caught the cloud on the top of Safed Koh, and shut it in the jar, and waited till the cloud is dead. Then he cut off this piece to wash the arm of Zakka Khel."

When the arm was clean, Jaffer brought out his instruments, and the man started to run away. "Coward!" yelled Jaffer. "Spawn of an Englishman!"

The Afridi came back with flashing eyes, and for the next four minutes never flinched. At the end of that time Jaffer placed the ball in his hand. "Pukka talisman, Zakka Khel."

"I know, I know! I shall have no sickness now. I am the hakim's slave."

"Then go to your cousin and give him this word from me. As I wrap this lungi about your arm, so I wrap a spell about you both. From henceforth there shall be peace between you till I come again."

"It shall be so, Hakim. I will bring the camel. Lundi Kotal is only five kro from here. Go in the safety of God, and may the riches of Rasul ever increase."

* There is no God but God, Muhammad is the messenger of God, and Dr. Rasul is the messenger of God's messenger.

XXXI

WHEN Jaffer reached Lundi Kotal, he took his firman to be examined, and slept for two hours. Then he mounted and continued. There is no need to enumerate the places from there to Kabul. In Pushtu they would sound as alien as the names which infidels in Chicago try to recognise when the muezzin shouts them from his balcony in the Northwestern Station. But he overtook Ali and Monday's kafila at a place which in English would be called Red Ghost.

On the sixth day out of Peshawar, Jaffer saw the valley open, and the key of India appear below like a dream — Kabul, the charming-at-a-distance. He was worn with lack of sleep, and so was Ali. On entering the city, they went at once to the house of Umar Khel's cousin, were received with cordiality, said not a word about the exchange of passports, and slept for eight hours.

Both camels were done up, and Jaffer left them in charge, to be returned to Peshawar. He bought two new ones, the swiftest to be had. Ali's load was cut down to two maunds, and they started, paying no attention to the Kabuli kafila.

They struck into the road toward Argandab, and Ali broke the silence. "I am always glad to get out of Kabul. To kiss a girl there costs thirty rupees. To speak your mind of a sayid costs twenty lashes, though the descendants of the Prophet deserve many a tongue-lashing. And to strike a petty official means a good chance of being blown from a gun."

"I shall reflect upon the system," said Jaffer.

Whoop la! Come on, Ali, we don't know where we're going, but we're on the way. I will now sing you my favourite song, which is in Arabic:

"Oh, du lieber Halsted Street, Halsted Street, Halsted Street,
Oh, du lieber Halsted Street, alles ist hin.
Magd ist weg, Geld ist weg, alles weg, alles weg,
Oh, du lieber Halsted Street, alles ist schon fort."

In all his life, Ali never made such time as he made that week, side by side with this raw beginner — and raw was hardly a metaphor by the end of the week. It was a week of frost and heat, dust and dew, high passes and low valleys, Ali pleading and Jaffer relentless. It was only when Jaffer insisted on bathing in the swift Helmund that Ali moved on, sarcastically saying that he was in a hurry.

They pulled into Tashkurgan white as lepers with dust. There he sold both of the Kabuli camels, bought new ones, and was on his way. But as they left Tashkurgan for Balkh, he felt a deadly weariness, and let his mount go slow.

Presently they were joined by a green-turbaned stranger from the north. His camel had a blue ribbon on its bridle. In his arms he carried a little boy, who wore blue beads about his neck, and a tiny ring with a turquoise in it. Ali knew the meaning of all that blue. It was a charm against the evil eye. Ali struck up an acquaintance.

The man was a traveller from Ishkashim. He had come two hundred miles across the north country, from where the Panja is daunted in its efforts to follow the Hindu Kush, and goes storming through granite gorges to become the Oxus. Over the mountains of Badakshan his camel had climbed, and so down, a painful and a dangerous journey.

The secret of his trip came out. His bright-eyed boy, now nine years old, had never spoken an intelligible word, being under the malign power of the evil

eye. The father was taking the boy to Mazar-i-Sharif to be cured.

Ali translated the Shughnan words for Jaffer's benefit, and Jaffer looked at the intelligent little face.

"Ali, are you sure he said 'never'?"

"Quite sure, Hakim."

"Never is a long day, Ali. Who is to unbewitch the boy at Mazar?"

Ali's camel was pacing beside Jaffer's. "Alas, Hakim Jaffer, is there then a Moslem in all the world who knows not the towers of Mazar-i-Sharif and what they cover?"

"Such am I, thou faithful Ali. Think how long I have been among kafirs."

"It is the tomb of my sacred namesake. Perhaps Jaffer knows not even Hazrat Ali."

"Now by the memory of the just, O Ali, I would tear out thy tongue and give it to the child who needs one, save that he never could control its insolence. If we are coming to the tomb of Hazrat Ali Sher-i-Khuda, there will Jaffer offer many prayers."

Ali smiled. "Thou sayest well, for already I have boasted of thee to the Sayid of Ishhashim."

"That was unwise. I cannot remove spells."

"Nor did I so speak, thou proud one. The dead hands of Hazrat Ali are mightier than the living hands of Jaffer. Even the print of his hand is mighty. Have I not seen it myself upon the stone at Panja Kala!"

Ali relapsed into dusty silence, which was not broken till late in the afternoon, when above them on the hill they saw the minarets and blue cupola of the ancient shrine. At Mazar the three men stayed in the suburbs, and each pitched a little tent and prepared supper. The child walked slowly from one man to another, and stood with questioning eyes. Jaffer watched his chance, and when the little chap came his way offered a tempting morsel. The boy opened his mouth wide.

Jaffer slowly lifted the food and took a good look. It was precisely as he thought. The boy was desperately tongue-tied, but probably could have managed to talk, except that his sensitive soul shrank from ridicule.

At sunrise the call to prayer vibrated afar in the sweet breeze, but Jaffer did not hear. It was an hour before he awoke and found the others gone. He rose and washed and dressed. He took his shawl and went into the city. The sayid and the child were sitting before the hangings that screen the tomb, and Jaffer, having removed his shoes, sat down beside them. He still remained when at last the suppliants rose and departed, the boy smelling of a sacred rose that the mullah had given him to further the cure.

Half an hour later, having returned to camp, Jaffer found Malikdin Sayid sitting upon the ground. The poor fellow was trying to make the boy talk.

Jaffer paused. Malikdin Sayid looked up at him and said something. Jaffer beckoned to Ali to come and interpret.

"The sayid says that Hazrat Ali is deaf, and his rose scentless."

"Tell the sayid that he speaks that which he understands not, for within this hour shall the child's tongue be loosened."

Ali translated, and the sayid stared.

"Tell him that the Lion of God has deigned to bless my medicines."

Ali translated. The man made no reply.

"Tell him," said Jaffer, "to leave the child with me, while he goes back into town and paces thrice around the masjid."

On hearing this proposition the sayid looked exceedingly doubtful and said something. Ali translated. "He fears *yarrah* magic."

"Bismillah!" cried Jaffer, leaping to his feet and

spitting on the ground. "As Allah lives it is not magic. Is he not beaten with twenty stripes who speaks ill of a sayid? What then shall be done to him who injures the body of a sayid?"

Ali caught the spirit of this, waved his arms, and translated it with the fire unimpaired.

The sayid answered, scowling. "I will say what shall be done to him who injures the body of this boy. I will bind him here. Habibullah will give me the key of the iron cage that swings on high on Lataband, and there I will leave the false hakim to eat the air without a tongue."

Ali shuddered. He well remembered the cage. He translated in a low voice.

"So be it," said Jaffer. "But one thing more. The sayid will leave at the shrine a gift for Hazrat Ali."

It was translated. The sayid bowed with a contemptuous wave of the hand.

Jaffer lifted a finger. "Thrice!" he said, pointing to the distant tomb. Then he picked up the child bodily and disappeared in the tent. He drew the opening close, put the child on the ground with head between the surgeon's knees, and operated. The flow was trifling, and there was no need of a stitch. The boy looked up with deep eyes, and said "Ali." Then he said it again. Then his voice rose in a sharp quaver as he said it the third time, and tears burst from his eyes.

Doubtless he meant the saint, but Ali of Peshawar came running to answer the call. When he perceived that the miracle was accomplished, he dropped on his knees with face toward Mecca, and touched the earth with his forehead, and gave thanks in a loud voice.

The boy went to him and raised him to his feet. Dabbing now his eyes and now his tongue with the wad of sterilised cotton which Jaffer had given him, the boy

began to speak, waiting patiently till every word was translated.

"I was chased by a wolf. They did not understand."

"They will understand now," said Jaffer, and listened. The words of years were coming, not very distinctly, but very fast.

"Why am I Djabrail?"

"It is the name of the angel by whom God speaks to men."

"I ask if Ala Mazda pulls hair from horses' tails in the night."

Jaffer was puzzled. By what strange degradation of time had the bright Ahura Mazda become a trivial demon? At last he said: "No, Gabriel."

"I ask if Shaitan spat the moon into the sky, thus."

"No, Gabriel."

"I ask if my soul shall sleep in the trumpet till Israfil blows it."

"Khuda medanad — God knows."

Ali exclaimed that the Sayid was approaching, and the oracle ceased. Whatever more the eager mind would desire to know of moon or earth — he must wait for all till the resurrection. Never again would he meet a man who knew the difference between an eclipse and a dragon.

"My father," said Gabriel, "I was chased by a wolf. And I can say 'Ali' as loud as the boatmen cry it when they pull together."

The father gazed upon the little face, and kissed it many times. He went silently to Jaffer, and taking the skilful hand placed it upon his own eyes.

Then he drew from within his kurta a leathern bag.

"Tell the great Hakim," he said, unsteadily, "that I am from Ishkashim. Tell him that high above Pandsh the few who know can still find black stones that have become red with time. Though time makes

the black stone a ruby, make it not red, O God, with the blood of Jaffer's heart."

Ali translated. Then Malikdin emptied the contents of his pouch into his hand. There were four stones. From his belt he took a knife and drew the edge across each in turn.

"These two are for the Shrine. They are soft. They are balas."

Ali translated. Jaffer shrugged his shoulders and shook his head.

Malikdin smiled, and placed in Jaffer's hand the other two stones.

Again Jaffer shook his head. "To Hazreti Ali be the praise, blessed be his name."

Malikdin bowed, but he still smiled. "I have heard that the noble one was buried in Meshed Ali at Kufa. It may be the truth. Once there was a vaseer who secretly entombed a donkey. His king prayed at the donkey's ziarat for the gift of a son, and it was granted."

Ali translated. Jaffer's laugh rang out. "I take the princely gift with more than a beggar's gratitude."

Ali and Jaffer moved onward, refreshed and ready for a spurt.

Takht-a-Pul — with a fortification overlooking the Oxus road. Then Balkh, mother of cities and balas rubies and golden apricots, but now in ruins.

Here Jaffer found a guide to Termes, and here he parted with the exhausted Ali. One day more and he came by forgotten paths out upon the banks of Oxus, just where Oxus begins "to forget the bright speed he had in his high mountain cradle in Pamere." Jaffer stripped and took a swim.

On Friday, May 8, at Patta Hissar, having beaten all records and sold his camel and Martini to a Jew, he watched the porters carry his tea aboard the steamer *Samarkand*.

Now he had a week ahead, to reflect on all the heresies he had seen and shared. For it is unlawful to pray for the cure of an arm; or to visit a tomb save as a reminder of death; or to pace about any shrine save that of Mecca; or to bless any name, save the name of God, when a disease is cured. Yet he had taken these heresies as a matter of course, and even pretended that they helped his surgery. Well, he would ask Dr. Trench if he had done right.

No foreigners except the Russian officials appeared on the boat. Foreigners get on to the Oxus flotilla about as easily as a Russian gets to Kabul or a camel goes through a needle's eye, but Jaffer's borrowed pass and *ocriti lista* served. For seven days the flat side-wheeler picked her way down the swift current among the shoals, tying up each night for safety's sake. On Saturday, May 16, Jaffer got off the boat at Charjui. That evening he would be in Kagan, and to-morrow in Bokhara.

XXXII

It was a great relief to Jaffer to lie back comfortably in the train, and reflect that he had in his belt two rubies worth at least a hundred dollars apiece. He felt it a crime to have accepted such riches just because a father loved his child. The world seemed to centre about children. Drop off a train anywhere in the world, stop at a house and ask after the baby, and nobody would be surprised. But of whom should he ask in Bokhara about that bad child, Saadi Sereef?

Towards evening the train swept into a great oasis and past walled gardens, and drew up before a low arabesque station of grey stone. It was Kagan. On the platform was a motley crowd, a coat of many colours, gathered like American farmers to see the train come in.

He slept at the Hotel d'Europe, and early Sunday morning rode for half an hour behind a short-winded engine up to the crenellated walls of Bokhara the Noble. He loaded his tea upon a donkey, paid his octroi at the gate, and followed into the crooked streets, while the donkey-boy ran ahead to make room for him with cries of "Pocht! pocht!" The travel-stained Jaffer, however, did not look like a personage, or likely to gain access to personages.

The boy conducted him through the ugly city to the tea-bazaar. He had no trouble in finding Ibrahim Ismail, who sat beside a smoking samovar. Nor did his fatness, Ibrahim, express surprise that five pood had arrived ahead of Ali. He gave the new agent tea and sweetmeats, and made many inquiries about affairs in

Peshawar. Jaffer studied him, and decided that he was not the man to inquire of concerning Saadi Sereef. Jaffer casually mentioned the price of the tea, whereat Ibrahim frowned with adipose wrinkles, and changed the conversation.

"This is Jaffer's first visit to Bokhara?"

"Strictly my first. What is that gigantic tower over there?"

"That is Minar Kalan. Formerly criminals were thrown from the top. The Russians object to the wholesome practice, and it has been abandoned."

"Your bazaars are vast."

"Thirty-two acres, Jaffer, even as the parts of the body."

"I await, O Ibrahim the Just, the words of that part of the body which is called the tongue. I await your decision to pay the price of Umar Khel."

"Grow not grey in Bokhara, young man."

"You refuse?"

"The price is eight pouhls in the pound too high."

"You embarrass me, Ibrahim Ismail. Who am I that I should be a judge of tea?"

"It is modestly answered. But you can see for yourself. Here is a leaf of Lonka — fine and soft as silk, a single leaf enough for a cup. And here is a leaf of your Kangra — coarse, common."

"You do not look at them, O Comfortable One."

"No, for my sight grows dim, and Allah has granted me finger-tips. I can select any one of my seventeen teas by the touch of a finger. Umar Khel is an honest man, but his fingers have held the rein and the sword too long to know the feel of tea. Nor has he seventeen varieties in his shop — though it is a good shop and he is a good man."

"If so, shall not his price prevail?"

"Assuredly. But Jaffer has forgotten his instructions."

Jaffer bowed his head in simulated humility. He saw a way opening to the best informed man in Bokhara — the prime minister himself.

"It may be so, thou hafiz of all tea-knowledge. It may be so, for there is one forgetfulness of the old, and another forgetfulness of the young. But the Kushbeg of Bokhara has power to refresh all memories, like hot water poured on the precious Lonka."

Ibrahim smiled heavily. "Vazee is concerned this day with weighty matters of state. He would spurn us from the gate of the Ark."

"Nevertheless to him I appeal. But first I will change these rags."

Ibrahim smiled again. "Do so by all means."

"You think he will then be assured that I do not need the money. But let us quarrel gently, thou Comfortable One. Leave the samovar to this youth of yours, and lead me to the man who will give you the largest rake-off on my new suit. Nay, lift no finger. If I had to live within these walls of mud, I should demand pay from everybody."

Ibrahim set his bulk in motion, and took his guest through the gorgeous crowds to a booth where a Jew was selling a wild Tatar a light summer suit, or yektey. The Tatar was laughing for joy as he stood in his new raiment, and cared not how little he was allowed for the horseskin which he had laid aside here in his Paris. He paid his bill and strode gaily off.

"Come within," whispered Ibrahim to the Jew, "and look at my prince. He wants no stuff from Manchester."

Jaffer rejected piece after piece and suit after suit. He had no desire to empurple the streets of Tashkent, but he wanted quality, and he got it.

"Shall it now be a choice cap of karakul, such as Habibullah wears, or a long, long turban?"

"Turban. White. And not too long."

"Every ell will ennoble the noble Agha's countenance. Let us say twenty."

"Seven," said Jaffer.

"Nay, Agha, so tall a man could not be enshrouded in seven. Look how large a tallis even I must wear when I am gathered to my fathers."

"Seven," repeated Jaffer, and seven he got. Then he bought a valise for the old suit, which he might again need.

They returned to the tea-bazaar. Jaffer caught up the samovar and marched off. "Bring some of the decoction, and move thy comfortable legs lest I be lost."

They approached the gate of the citadel, were kept waiting by the guards for half an hour, and were then permitted to enter and kneel before the square platform where the Prime Minister sat. Daily for two hours in the morning he was to be found administering justice in the Gate.

Jaffer advanced with a delicately curved glass of tea on a saucer. "I would not insult Your Highness, O Nasrulla Beg, but in Peshawar it is said that no appeal for justice is too faint to be heard by Your compassionate ear. So please You, taste this glass of Kangra and say if any so good has ever assailed the fortress of Your mouth."

Nasrulla Beg looked upon the audacious traveller, and saw that this was no ordinary povendah. He tasted the tea and slowly drank it all, concealing his satisfaction.

"I do not like Indian teas," he said. "I cannot understand why the fancy for them has sprung up among us."

"May it please Your Highness, I like no tea at all. Coffee is my drink."

"What you like or do not like is of no importance. You have a saucy tongue."

"I am Hakim, Your Highness. I learned in Amer-

ica to be saucy. Your Highness must forgive. I seek knowledge — even to the edge of China, as saith the Book — and if Your Highness declares that Chinese tea is better, then I have heard this day that which I shall remember.”

The Kushbeg turned and asked Ibrahim concerning the dispute, and promptly decided against Jaffer. But the remark about America had not gone unnoticed.

“What is the name of the new president — not the Hunter, but the new one?”

“Wilson.”

“It sounds very foreign. You have not entered his employ?”

“No, Your Highness.”

“Perhaps you would consider settling in Bokhara. Ibrahim tells me that you are of good family, and prosperous. I have no doubt that Badewlet * would permit it. Who knows but that I His humblest servant might find patients for Hakim Jaffer?”

“I thank His Majesty and Your Highness. But I return to America.”

“You shall go in peace, but remember the invitation. Are there other medical students from Afghanistan or Turkestan?”

“One from Kabul, Your Highness, the only Afghan in America except the Amir’s brilliant nephew, Achmed Abdullah. And of course Saadi ibn Astanakoul.”

“Saadi who?”

“Why, the son of your eminent predecessor in office, Your Highness.”

“You are speaking riddles. Astanakoul has no son named Saadi.”

Jaffer had now learned what he came to Bokhara to learn, but he hoped for more.

“I did not know Saadi personally, Highness, and doubtless I was misinformed. But there is certainly a

* His Majesty.

Saadi who boasts of having known His Majesty when His Majesty was yet Crown Prince."

Nasrulla Beg stroked his smooth black beard and reflected. "Badewlet, when Turra-djan,* did indeed bestow favour upon a young beg named Saadi, in the months before Badewlet came to the throne. But whence came the visitor, whether from Teheran or Stamboul, I never knew, nor does it befit the master of the falcons to inquire into the friendships of the Eagle. And now I can give you no more time. See the crowd that has gathered. Feed the Hakim generously, Ibrahim, and give him coffee, for he is like an Arab."

* Crown Prince — literally, Soul Prince. But the "Djan" is merely the term of endearment which every Persian gives to his eldest son, and which Saadi gave to Ameen at parting.

XXXIII

It was breakfast time on Monday morning, May 18, when, in fresh and superb raiment, Jaffer descended from the train at Tashkent, surveyed the Russian buildings that surrounded the station, and stepped into the first vehicle which presented itself. It happened to be a troika — three horses abreast — and Jaffer started off for the Grand Hotel. There proved to be nothing very grand about it, but there were trees and peacocks, and a Bactrian camel was grumbling near the office window.

When he had shown his passport, he ordered the best room in the house, and made more or less ado about having an excellent meal served at once. Then he inquired in Persian for letters. There was of course nothing for the name inscribed in his passport. He casually remarked that the other members of his party, Dr. Jaffer and Mr. Sereef, had proceeded west from Charjui.

His Afghan hauteur impressed the clerk, who handed him a letter for each of the missing men, and asked him to forward them. Jaffer put the letters in his pocket, and awaited breakfast. After breakfast he ordered another troika, and set out to see the town.

In the troika he slipped the letter for Saadi into his money-belt. Then he opened the envelope addressed to himself. He inspected the telegram — "Cetinje, April 15, 1914 — Saadi Sereef — bsvd — Mohammed Beg." He learned it by heart. Then he read Dr. Trench's own words, copied "400a" on a piece of paper, stopped the troika, shouted "Gospitalnaya," and handed the slip of paper to the driver. But the broad avenue on which he was bowling along was itself the

Gospitalnaya, and all the driver had to do was to proceed a hundred yards farther.

There was a small sign on the house, in Russian letters. Jaffer figured out that in a decent language it would read "Dr. Yukitch." He rang the bell, and was admitted by a turbaned Sart. He was conducted through two dim rooms into the presence of the physician.

Dr. Yukitch, a prepossessing man of thirty, rose to meet him. Jaffer introduced himself in French, but Dr. Yukitch asked if he did not speak Russian or German.

"Sicher, und Gott sei dank!" answered Jaffer. "I am not sick, doctor, but I have heard of you as the one man who handles filaria without the knife."

"You flatter me, Dr. Jaffer. You are German-trained?"

"I am fond of the Germans, but I am not German-trained. I am a graduate of Lister College, in Chicago."

"Chicago! Extraordinary. And may I venture to inquire why you did not proceed from Bombay direct?"

"Business, Dr. Yukitch. I am passing through Turkestan on an errand for my dearest friend — a Chicago physician named Trench."

"Dr. Isham Trench?" calmly inquired the man, there in the heart of Asia.

"No other," answered Jaffer, surprised to the tips of his nerves.

"We were classmates at Vienna, Dr. Jaffer. It was a large class, but he would remember me as the man who frequently asked him about farmlands in America, for I thought of going there. Or if he has forgotten those talks, he will hardly have forgotten the dinner we gave him before he graduated. There were twenty of us, and it was the twenty-third of April, 1907, in the Hotel Union in Alsergrund."

"A birthday dinner?"

"Yes, and he was much the quietest man at the table."

Jaffer rose and advanced. "Will you kindly allow me to shake hands with you?"

The ceremony over, Jaffer proceeded. "Doctor, why don't you write to your classmate?"

Yukitch shrugged his shoulders. "There is no occasion."

"Then let me make one. Can you tell me if there is any customs regulation to interfere with the sending of uncut gems by registered mail?"

"I know of none, but accidents sometimes happen even to registered mail."

Jaffer drew from his pocket the two rubies of Malik-din Sayid. "These represent a fee, and I must share it with Dr. Trench."

"You surprise me, Dr. Jaffer."

"There was no bargain," laughed Jaffer. "It is merely a token of love. Pray send it for me, and with it a letter saying that I called upon you. I haven't the nerve to write before I finish the task he set me."

Dr. Yukitch examined the stones admiringly. "It could be done — quite safely." He gave back one of them, and disappeared into his laboratory. He returned with a mortar containing a thick paste, and proceeded to surround the stone with a layer of it. He rolled the bolus deftly between his palms, measured it with calipers, and again disappeared. When he returned, the big pill had been dipped and was drying in a pasteboard box, where it lay on top of a dozen others.

"You see the proposed method, Dr. Jaffer. A brief note of instructions will suffice. But, you had better probe the new one before it is dry."

"Friends of Isham Trench," said Jaffer, "do not probe each other's pills."

Dr. Yukitch looked at him, man to man. Then he

sat down to his desk and wrote his note, and handed it to Jaffer to read.

"Charming, doctor! But what is this at the end? This is a reckless promise — to be of any possible service to me."

"Hardly reckless. If your business in Turkestan involves any concessions to Germans, you will find my helpfulness curiously limited."

Jaffer smiled. "If the medicine is dry enough, will not your servant start it on its way?"

Dr. Yukitch made a neat package, addressed it according to directions, summoned his Sart, and despatched both box and letter.

"And now shall we discuss filaria, or — your business in Tashkent?"

"As for filaria, Dr. Yukitch, I am quite content to know that it yields to your remedies. But I have a natural curiosity to learn how you happen to be out here at the end of the world."

Dr. Yukitch spoke rather dryly. "I am selling medicine, but I will add a subsidiary reason. I am here because of karst."

"Is he an Austrian?"

"No, he is the bones of certain insignificant animals who did me much harm. Karst is limestone. It is the material of my country, which is a land of crags and valleys. It renders agriculture precarious, and it separates us."

"You must be an Afghan," smiled Jaffer.

"I was born in Herzegovina, Dr. Jaffer, and the geography of the Balkan peninsula is sufficient reason why I am in Tashkent. You observe that I am blaming nature, not Austria."

"I observe," said Jaffer, "that you remind me of Dr. Trench. But if you prefer to blame Austria, I beg you not to spare my feelings."

"You are a Moslem, Dr. Jaffer, and the hatred be-

tween my people and yours is not a matter of yesterday. Germany has long been hand and glove with the Turk."

"The Turks, my dear Dr. Yukitch, are what an old friend of mine calls soft Moslems. It is a matter of regret to me that Germany has anything to do with them."

"Well, sir, it seems possible for us to speak in an impersonal way of these things, and I do not mind saying that I came out to Tashkent because an Orthodox Slav finds it hard to make a living in Bosnia-Herzegovina. You are of course under the impression that the Dual Monarchy has civilised my country."

"Yes."

"It is a false impression. To be sure, the Monarchy has spent money in Bosnia. It cost them sixty-five million crowns to build a narrow gauge from Serajevo to the Servian border, a distance of ninety miles. The travel on it does not pay for the coal burned."

"A military road, apparently."

"Quite apparently. And the Monarchy spends four times as much on the gendarmerie as on the schools."

"You must be a dangerous lot."

"So dangerous, my dear doctor, that two thousand families migrated to Servia last year to escape starvation. So dangerous that our Moslems are leaving for Anatolia. So dangerous that our range lands are given to Austrian settlers. So dangerous that taxes rise till our peasants can pay neither the begs nor the collector. So dangerous, in short, that none of us are wanted in the mountains we have inhabited for fifteen hundred years."

"Why, it sounds like home," smiled Jaffer. "I suppose that educated Bosnians like yourself are the most dangerous of all."

"Naturally. Suppose we get to Vienna — my own education represents great sacrifices made by my brothers in order to have one educated man in the family.

On graduation, we find Bosnian commerce in the hands of the Austrians. We find Bosnian agriculture hopeless. We find eleven Austrians to one Bosnian teaching in our gymnasia. We find six Austrians to one Bosnian in our lawcourts. We find public assemblies forbidden, and journalism gagged."

"Is the case as bad for physicians?"

"Not quite, if the physician is willing to keep his mouth shut. I tried it a while, but got into trouble. I belonged to the class of 1907, you remember. That October we held a great Bosnian popular gathering, and formulated a programme demanding self-government. The Moslems supported us. I took a hand, and was locked up for my pains. Our demonstration merely hastened the Annexation."

Jaffer mused. "So Moslem and Orthodox stood together. How about the Catholics?"

"Very little help from that source. The Monarchy has played us off, Catholic against Orthodox. The Crown Prince would like to convert us all, you know. He is clerical and Jesuit, and Bosnia is his hobby. He personally annexed us. Aerenthal was only the hammer with which he smashed the treaty of Berlin."

"And so you decided to take to the woods, as they say in America."

"It was a choice between coming here and really taking to the woods, as our haiduks did in years past. But a rifle shot is never heard in Bosnia. Our houses are carefully searched for arms."

"You might have gone to America."

"Perhaps, Dr. Jaffer, but chance brought me the discovery of my remedy. Besides, you have too many Hungarians. A million have left in the last eighteen months. The Dual Tyranny has had to forbid emigration."

Jaffer mused. "May I smoke?"

"A thousand pardons!" Dr. Yukitch clapped his

hands for his Sart, and then, recollecting that Iskander had gone to the postoffice, arose.

"I'll roll one myself," said Jaffer.

"But you won't refuse coffee!"

"Never. Three things I never refuse — a cigarette, a sip of coffee, and a morsel of something sweet."

"Three typical Moslem failings," smiled his new friend. "Should you happen to visit my country, go to the Café Bendbashi in Serajevo, and you will find all three in perfection."

Dr. Yukitch excused himself for five minutes, at the end of which time he returned with cold water, little cups, and an iron ladle of café Ture — thick, brown, beaded with tiny bubbles. Jaffer took a swallow of the cold water, to harden his throat against the hot sweet that followed.

"I shall think of you at the Café Bendbashi. It can hardly prepare better Mocha than this."

"Think rather of me and my young legal friend Bogdan Zerajitch sitting there. It was on a May day in 1910, shortly before our new Sabor opened. We were speculating as to how representative that assembly might be made. My friend was gloomy and hopeless, because the Governor, Vareschanin, had crushed our little rebellion at Rakovitcha. But he did not tell me what he intended to do. He fired at Vareschanin, missed him five times, and then shot himself. 'Die Woche' had a picture of the governor and Franz Joseph standing before the cathedral a few days before the shooting; but it had no word about the shooting. Prussians despise such marksmanship."

"Ah! Perhaps other such attempts have been made."

"Yes. Croatia has tried hard to shake off Hungarian tyrants. I could tell you the details of three recent episodes. All at Agram. Pretty place, Agram, but it has nothing to hope for."

"Haven't I heard of dreams of a United States of Balkany?"

"Yes, Dr. Jaffer, and I am a Serb before I am a Bosnian. But there is no use in talking about it. It is perfectly useless to dream of a political union of the Serbian people. I see nothing for my people but starvation and emigration. Your admirable Germans will inherit the karst, and cultivate it with chemicals."

"Bismillah! You take it tamely."

"It is the only way to take it. From the earliest days, Southern Slavs have been village folk, naïve, impulsive individualists. Naturally, any neighbour capable of impersonal co-operation has enslaved us. We are in all the dictionaries as 'slaves.' We have been sold in every market in Europe. And now what can I do for you and Dr. Trench?"

"You can tell me where Mr. Saadi Sereef is."

Dr. Yukitch jumped, perceptibly. "I haven't the remotest idea where he is. Has he been in America?"

"Yes. He has been living in Dr. Trench's house with several other oriental students."

"Is it possible! I did not suppose that Trench had the slightest interest in us. But I can see why we might gather around him. He is an impartial fellow."

"Dr. Yukitch, where do you guess this young Mr. Sereef to be?"

"France or England. Probably England."

"I wish to see him. Do you advise me to go to England?"

"Not without an address."

Jaffer smoked in silence. "It will be a great disappointment to Dr. Trench. I don't feel quite free to say why. It is a purely personal matter between them."

"Does Trench know that I know Saadi?"

Jaffer shook his head. "Mr. Sereef gave your street and number to a Chinese student. I have to thank Mr.

Wu's excellent memory for the pleasure of this meeting. I take it that Mr. Sereef is a great joker. He passed himself off as a prince of Bokhara — son of the former Vizier."

"What — that old devil Astanakoul?"

Jaffer nodded, grinning.

Dr. Yukitch let his amusement effervesce. "Kolossal! Did he have you also gebumfidel?"

"Until yesterday," admitted Jaffer. "I had it straight from the present Vasi's lips that I was being grossly and cruelly deceived. Also he decided against me in my appeal for a just price for my tea."

The Bosnian's eyes twinkled. "He would take a personal interest in you — even to a third of your load, if he dared. Bokhara is almost as Asiatic as Austria; not quite, for the Emir keeps out of these affairs, but Franz Joseph makes everything a personal matter."

The fling at Austria made Jaffer more direct.

"Could Saadi be in Bosnia?"

"No! And now I think that I have fulfilled my promise to Trench. Have you seen the town? I shall be delighted to show you Tashkent and Troitsky. Or shall we run down to Samarkand? If you were in Bokhara only yesterday, you did not stop to see the tomb of Tamerlane."

The nostrils of Jaffer's eagle nose dilated, and his diplomacy vanished. "Tamerlane be damned. I want facts."

Yukitch looked grave. "It is a long time since I quarrelled with anybody, Dr. Jaffer. Do you imply that I have not given you facts?"

"What you have given me are facts — I make no doubt of it. But they are useless facts."

"Certainly. If Trench's relations with Saadi are personal, so are mine."

"Would you advise me to go to Cetinje?"

"By all means, if you happen to be in Europe next

winter. The climate is perfect, and I can recommend the Grand."

"You will not give me a note to Mohammed Beg?"

Dr. Yukitch drew in the corners of his mouth, so that his moustache appeared to bristle. "I know no Mohammed Beg who lives in Cetinje. You must remember that I have not been in Europe in four years. And I have had no word from Saadi in many months. Why, pray, are you suppressing your later information?"

"This," said Jaffer, "is all I know about Cetinje." He held out the cable message.

Dr. Yukitch took it and read it. At once he said, "Have you any idea what this means?"

"Not the slightest. I want your advice."

Dr. Yukitch continued to study the message. At last he handed it back, but his byzantine eyes were narrowed and impenetrable. "I advise you," he said, "to burn it."

Jaffer ignited the paper, and tossed it out of the window. "Now confidence for confidence, Dr. Yukitch."

Dr. Yukitch arose and went to the window and stood looking out. He must have stood there five minutes. Jaffer smoked calmly, and without turning his head, but he heard a sound as if fingers were being intertwined and twisted behind somebody's back. At length Dr. Yukitch returned.

"Saadi," he said, "was born in 1888. He has a family name which is Slavonic, but he has not seen fit to confide this name to Dr. Trench, and you will not ask me for it."

"Certainly not," said Jaffer. "Is Saadi a real name?"

"Yes, and an old one, though I know of no other Saadi in Bosnia. Our nobles usually combined a Turkish name with the Slavonic. You have mentioned 'Mohammed Beg.' That is typical."

"And that is probably only a first name?"

"Very probably, Dr. Jaffer. Well, Saadi's father is Stepan of Starigrad, and he is the most humane of all the Bosnian begs. Like most of them, he is of Christian ancestry."

"Slavonic converts?"

"Yes, by force of circumstances. One of Stepan's remote ancestors found himself driven out of Servia into Bosnia, on account of his Protestant opinions — especially his scorn of the marriage ceremony and so on. We call those old families the Bogumils. But after the Turkish conquest they found themselves forced to choose between keeping their lands and keeping their religion, and accordingly they became Moslems."

"Extraordinary," murmured Jaffer.

"Stepan is the most humane landlord in my country. He alone has solved the problem of keeping his Christian peasants content and the Austrian tax-collectors satisfied. He is what the Japanese call an intensive farmer. Stepan is respected alike by Nikolas of Montenegro and by Franz Joseph, and it would be hard to name another Bosnian of whom the same thing can be said.

"Saadi was a brilliant child — very daring, very impulsive, very affectionate, and a born mimic. He was passionately devoted to his little sister Stepanie, and he swore eternal brotherhood with a certain boy. The relations of brother and sister, and brother and brother, are by far the strongest relations among us, Dr. Jaffer. At the call of brother or sister a man will leave his own wife. I do not say it is rational — I merely say that it is a fact. Adopted brothers, or pobratims, seal the bond with their blood, and I have never known it to be broken."

"That may throw light on the telegram," murmured Jaffer.

"I have not said so, Dr. Jaffer, and I beg you to re-

member that I have not said so. In 1905 Saadi graduated from a certain gymnasium and entered the University, at Vienna, to study medicine. He may easily have seen Trench there in 1906 or 1907, without knowing him. In 1908 occurred the annexation, and Bosnia-Herzegovina was filled with Austrian troops. Late in the autumn a terrible thing occurred near Starigrad. Stepanie's body — with a stone around the neck — was taken from the river, and certain peasants had seen it when it was thrown there by three or four drunken soldiers.

"When that news reached Saadi, he disappeared from Vienna. The commander near Starigrad had done his best to fasten the guilt upon the guilty men, and had failed. From that minute Saadi became an enemy of the Monarchy. He went through Herzegovina, disguised, working on the minds of the students in the gymnasia, and on the minds of the more intelligent peasants. The beggar on Mostar bridge might be Saadi. The travelling friar from Croatia might be Saadi. The Moslem pilgrim might be Saadi. Once, at the end of a year of this sort of thing, he actually figured as a lecturer from Vienna, sent out by the government. But this last disguise was a little too bold, and he was caught. That was late in 1909. In view of his just provocation and of his father's excellent standing with the government, he was merely banished. He went to Belgrad.

"In 1910, June 15, my friend Zerajitch made his attack on Vareshanin. It was a complete surprise to me, but I had had one taste of prison, and did not care for another. I left on horseback within an hour. I found Saadi at a certain coffee-house — the Zeleni Vienaz — in Belgrad. My plans for coming out here were already matured, and Saadi begged to come along. He came, and stayed for six months, in this very house. Here he plunged into Persian, of which he already

knew the rudiments. From here he wandered to Bokhara, and was taken up by the crown prince. From there he went to Eshkabad. From Eshkabad he returned boldly to Vienna, and was promptly arrested. But Saadi has a way with him. He demanded audience with Franz Joseph. He told the old man that he was tired of being an exile, and wished to go to jail or else to resume the study of medicine. He would make no promises to be good. But Franz Joseph has more sense than the men about him, and he instructed Saadi to go ahead and study 'as if he were one of only six to a professor,' remarking that professors were an expensive thing."

"Good old Franz," murmured Jaffer.

"The last time I heard from Saadi," continued Yukitch, as if drawing to a close, "was a year ago last Christmas. He had just returned from hospital service in Old Servia, and was trying to catch up with his fifth year work. He had got a nasty cut in the neck, *vom hinten*, while he was bending over a wounded Turk."

"You have told me a good deal, Dr. Yukitch. I am profoundly grateful. But may you not have overlooked one or two things?"

Yukitch smiled. "I have told you enough to show you that you are not likely to find your man."

"You have given me clues."

"They are worthless. I do not believe that Stepan knows where his son is. Of course, if you go to Vienna and ask the secret police —"

"I shall not do that."

"Then take my advice. Come with me to Samarkand. Then return and proceed in leisurely fashion to Moscow, and see the Kremlin. Then go to Petersburg."

"But I don't care to see either place."

"Very good; proceed to Frankfurt and prepare a re-

port on Ehrlich's laboratory for Trench's benefit. Linger in the realms of your beloved Siegfried Meyer."

"Siegfried Meyer?"

"Assuredly. It is not safe in Berlin to say *Seine Majestät*."

Jaffer laughed. "Don't think me ungrateful, Dr. Yukitch, but tell me when the next train leaves for Moscow."

"You are no Moslem, my dear doctor. Moslems never hurry."

"I have lived in Chicago, Dr. Yukitch. When does the train leave?"

"Eight o'clock to-morrow morning, Petersburg time."

"It is too long to wait," said Jaffer. "How soon can I start back for Samarkand?"

"Nine forty-five this evening."

"Is it longer to Vienna via Samarkand and the Caucasus than via Moscow?"

"No. But think of what you miss, Dr. Jaffer. You must see the sunrise turn the Kremlin into flaming emeralds and gold of paradise."

"A pretty phrase, Dr. Yukitch. But I have seen the sunrise turn the Taj Mahal into a pearl of paradise without convincing me that there is a paradise. And by the southern route I shall see Tiflis, which is a more interesting place."

"Jivio! You are right. Sulphur baths, seventy languages, two men to every woman, and the noblest mountain pass in Europe."

It struck Jaffer that this sudden enthusiasm was not of the right breed.

"Dr. Yukitch, is it possible to save time by omitting Tiflis?"

The Bosnian's face fell. "I suppose so — a mere trifle — a single day. I believe there is a train from

Baku which makes Vienna in five nights and four days."

"Ah, thank you. I start back to Samarkand this evening. Promise to dine with me at the alleged Grand and see me off."

"If you will stay here for tiffin. Ishkander is not a bad cook. Ah, here he comes with the postal receipt. You shall keep it."

Jaffer stayed, and discussed medicine, and Chicago, and the possibility that Iskander was a descendant of Alexander of Macedon. In the afternoon Jaffer sent Umar Khel a draft. Then the two doctors took a long drive about town, past luxuriant gardens where no leaf stirred in the breathless air, past irrigation ditches and quaint water mills.

At four o'clock Yukitch left Jaffer at the Grand, promising to be back for dinner at seven.

Jaffer threw himself on the bed and tried to think. He realised that he had put up a good deal of bluff, and was about to enter upon a wilder and more dangerous goose-chase than he had dreamed of. For the first time since he had left Peshawar, depression seized him. What earthly sense was there in risking his life again to inform an adventurer of what the adventurer was only too damnably well aware? He would give the whole thing up, as Yukitch so strongly advised. And with a sense of relief he drowsed off.

Half an hour later he was awakened by the screaming of peacocks. In his irritation he muttered a Persian proverb: "When the peacock looks at his feet, pride fails."

The utterance of the words stirred something within him. Had he himself been looking at his feet? Had his pride failed? Was he going to be beaten? Some magic charm in the word "pride" seemed to pull him. He knew that Dr. Trench took pride in him, and he knew that Dr. Trench would think less of him if he fell by the way now. Of course the doctor would be nice

about it, and tell him he had done right to quit, but the doctor himself was no quitter. Jaffer got up. He wouldn't go back on the doctor.

At seven Yukitch appeared, and they dined, and afterwards smoked in the garden, where the peacocks had gone to roost.

As they waited at the station for the train to Samarkand, Dr. Yukitch put one question. "Shall you go to Frankfurt?"

"No. To Belgrad."

"It is as I feared. You will land in the old fortress."

"If Allah wills, Dr. Yukitch. But I shall get out."

"*Od roba ikad, iz groba nikad.* That is to say — out of prison, yes; out of a grave, never. It is our Serbian adage."

"Well," said Jaffer, "it is our American adage that 'never' is a long day. Here comes the train."

The train pulled in from the north, and the passengers piled out for glasses of hot tea. Jaffer selected his second class apartment, and held out his hand. Dr. Yukitch took it and was slow to release it. "Do not hurry, my friend. Do not reach Belgrad worn out. Spend all of June in the Caucasus, for you may never have another chance."

Jaffer shook his head, listening to the nervous pant of the locomotive, which seemed to be summoning him like a Turkish horse.

"Very well," said Yukitch gravely. "Here is a parcel which I have ventured to bring along. It contains a French work on Slavonic origins, and a manuscript of my own about filaria. The manuscript is written in Servian, and has my name on it. You will not be able to read it, and I shall be glad to have it back at your leisure. But it would flatter my vanity if you would keep it on the table in your hotel while you stay in Belgrad."

"Sir, you are a good friend. If I can't read it, maybe the chambermaid can."

"Exactly, Dr. Jaffer. Or she may show it to the clerk. I do not desire to boast of my acquaintance with the maids, but the clerks in Belgrad will not think the less of you for knowing me. Excuse my conceit, and may we meet again — Ako Bog da — if God grant it."

"Inshallah!" echoed Jaffer, and quite unconsciously thanked Allah that he had got away with undissuaded heart.

XXXIV.

As he lay blinking at the lone candle in the glass case over the door of the car, Jaffer rehearsed the events of the day. Invaluable as the Bosnian's information had been, it was not so significant as the advice. Dr. Yukitch was anxious that Jaffer should not go to Belgrad at all, and anxious that, if he went, he should not be there before July. Therefore Jaffer would get to Belgrad at the earliest possible moment, and leave Belgrad before July. Only Allah knew where he would go from there, but Allah would provide a Mecca. Jaffer fell asleep.

He travelled three nights and two days, to the Caspian Sea. He crossed that in thirteen hours. He sniffed the petroleum and the magnolias of Baku, and boarded the train of which Yukitch had told him.

He had packed his new suit, and as he lay curled up in his old one he looked about as tough as he had looked on reaching Bokhara. But what did he care? He was going to Belgrad — to Darol-i-Jihad, "the home of war." He would need his wits there, and nothing mattered till then.

Across the plains of southern Russia — where so many millions object to being called Russians — he studied the book which Yukitch had lent him. It contained not a word about the history of the Southern Slavs, but was amazingly learned in philology. It suited the bored Jaffer well enough. He really preferred the Slavs in a lump, and their ancient gods to their modern gods.

"Bogu," the universal Slavic word for God, was clearly the Sanskrit "Bhaga" and Persian "Baga,"

meaning good. One Slavonic god was "Svetotit," but Jaffer could think of no parallel. Doubtless all these gods were living still under the guise of Christian saints — living and interfering with scientific medicine.

At Vienna, on the morning of Tuesday, May 26, he obtained at last the luxury of a good Turkish bath, and beguiled his half-hour in the hot-room with the daily papers. He found nothing whatever about events in India or America, but he learned that a great automobile race was about to occur, and that the Austrian Crown Prince was to receive a visit from the German Emperor on the twelfth of June. After his bath, he wandered round the city, looked at the outside of the buildings where Trench had studied, heard a band in the park playing some "Merry Widow" music, bought a Baedeker, and caught the oriental express for Belgrad. He rested badly on that train. At Budapest he would have been thankfully glad to transfer to the Danube steamer, but that would please Dr. Yukitch too much.

It was an undeniably dazed Jaffer who, after more than a month of steady travel, got off the train at Semlin. Presently he found himself on the deck of the ferry boat, crossing from Semlin to Belgrad. The yellow Save made him dizzy. There before him rose the ancient fortress — which had been captured by Celt, Roman, Hun, Sarmatian, Goth, Gepid, Frank, Greek, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Austrian, Servian. Belgrad meant white castle; well, it was stained a dark red now, as if with coagulate gore. He cared not a curse who owned it. Heavens, how tired he was!

Jaffer leaned against the rail, tall, languid, handsome in his best Bokhara clothes. He slowly extracted a box of cigarettes from his cummerbund, and was opening it with limp fingers, when a passing elbow sent it flying.

The offender saw it strike the yellow flood, and turned with words that were curtly apologetic. He was a military officer, a compact, energetic figure, with a hard-

bitten face and a relentless eye. Jaffer had seen a similar expression, he thought, on the face of fanatics in his own country — men who, with a hundred followers, attack an army, or stand against an army till cut down.

"Il n'y a pas de quoi, monsieur," said Jaffer, with a lordly accent born of fatigue.

"Mais non!" snapped the officer, drawing something from his pocket. "Monsieur will accept these."

"Monsieur will do nothing of the sort," responded Jaffer.

"Alors —" the officer changed his tone and stepped forward, and Jaffer noticed that his close cropped hair was naturally curly — "I address perhaps monsieur le prince. But I am at least a major. See, I command an operation!" — With a pleasant smile he tucked the packet into Jaffer's cummerbund, and saluted.

Jaffer returned the salute. "As a surgeon," he said, "I sometimes see the necessity of a major operation." And with this the incident was closed.

Amenities having been exchanged, Jaffer thought better of Belgrad, and at the wharf surrendered his passport without complaint.

He had hardly opened his Baedeker, and he had no desire to be seen gaping at it on the street, but before leaving his luggage he took a look at the map. To the west lay the fortress, and he felt too tired to climb. To the east lay some gardens. He would go over there and stretch out for a while. The street in front of the gardens was named "Widow Dan," which recalled the "Merry Widow" music he had heard in Vienna — music which, by the way, is forbidden in Servia, because it ridicules a prince of Montenegro. He left the Baedeker with his luggage at the wharf, and sauntered east, over the stoniest streets he had ever trod. He found the gardens, discovered a long seat, tightened his cummerbund so that his money belt could not be reached without his knowledge, and lay down at full length. In

Berlin the thing would have been impossible; here it passed unnoticed. He drowsed off with merry widow music singing faintly in his brain.

When he awoke, a fine old gentleman in a frock coat stood looking at him — as indeed any one well might. Habibullah or the Gaekwar of Baroda would not have looked half so picturesque.

“Verzeiung!” began Jaffer, feeling confusedly that he owed somebody an apology.

“Bitte!” smiled the old gentleman, and the way was open for German.

“I do not speak Servian,” said Jaffer, rising. “My usual language is English, and in English we have a word ‘widow.’ Can you tell me, sir, why this street has that name?”

The old gentleman suppressed his amusement. “The word is Vidov. It means St. Vitus.”

“Himmel!” ejaculated Jaffer. “Is there so much chorea in Belgrad?”

The old gentleman gave a deep chuckle. “I sometimes think so. They are talking of changing this street to Kumanovo.”

“A very good idea, sir. I’d change it to anything. What, pray, is Kumanovo?”

“It is the name of their great recent battle, my dear young sir. At Kumanovo they were revenged on the Turk. You are evidently not an Osmanli.”

“No, sir. Far from it. I come from Kabul.”

“Ah! And are you pleased with your suzerain?”

“No, sir,” said Jaffer. He said it with a defiant sense that neither time nor society is so constructed as to permit complete veracity.

“You interest me,” said the old gentleman, taking a card from his pocket.

“I am without cards, Baron,” said Jaffer, “but I am addressed as Dr. Abdul. You behold me profoundly ignorant of all things Slavonic. A mere sight-seer.”

"Perhaps we may show you something worth seeing. Our German club ought not to be impenetrable by a physician from Kabul."

"You do me infinite honour. I shall give myself the pleasure of calling on you before I leave. May I ask you one or two questions, such as a child might ask?"

The old gentleman sat down. "*Also, Herr Doktor!*"

"I hardly know where to begin, Baron, because I have everything to learn. Yesterday I was checking up the ancient Slavic gods, when I ought to have been reading history. I find a Sanskrit parallel for Bog, but none for Svetotit."

The Baron smiled. "If that is your first childish question, I can't imagine what the second will be like. Svetotit was a sky-god — a very important person, I believe, and he doubtless passed over into Sveti Vid — St. Vitus. The Servians make much of Sveti Vid since Kosovo. They even call it the festival of Christ on the Cross."

"And what was Kosovo?"

"Merely the most famous date in Servian history — June 28, 1389, when the nation was destroyed by the Turks. It was Vid's Day. In Servian, Vidov Dan."

There was a click in Jaffer's brain as the mechanism shunted certain facts together. The last two letters of Mohammed Beg's cable were V.D. And Dr. Yukitch wished Jaffer not to be in Belgrad before July.

"Do they have a celebration, or a funeral service, or what, on that day?"

"It will be a great celebration this year, I fancy. The battle of Kumanovo is fresh in mind, and it is the five hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of Kosovo. If you are here on the twenty-eighth, you will be able to see for yourself."

"I must see it, by all means. And now one last question, Baron. I have just arrived from Vienna. Be good enough to recommend a hotel."

The Baron rose. "The Moskwa is as good as any — at the head of Balanska Street."

"I will go there."

"And I," said the old man, shaking hands, "shall be delighted to send some younger man to call on you."

Jaffer sat down again, and dipped into the major's box for a cigarette. His eye caught the name of the brand, "Stepanie!" He remembered Saadi's little sister! He shuddered and put the cigarette back.

He wandered around town awhile, and bought a cheap suit of European clothes and a Turkish fez. He returned to the wharf, claimed his luggage, and drove to the Moskwa. It was a place where he could easily spend more money than he could afford. In his room he spread out Dr. Yukitch's manuscript on the table, and applied himself to his Baedeker.

That evening at dinner he exchanged a few German words with the waiter. The hotel, he remarked, seemed very cosmopolitan. The waiter shrugged his shoulders and said that all the hotels of Belgrad were cosmopolitan. "All?" queried Jaffer. "All except such places as the Green Wreath," answered the waiter. "Zeleni Vienaz is a place where no gentleman should go, especially a gentleman from Stamboul."

There was another click in Jaffer's brain. Zeleni Vienaz was the name of the coffee house where Yukitch had found Saadi in 1910.

Accordingly, immediately after dinner that Wednesday evening, the "gentleman from Stamboul" had made it a point to find Zeleni Vienaz and was drinking café Ture in the midst of it. It was an amazing contrast to the formal glories of the Moskwa. The long, reeking room swarmed with costumes more stained and worn than the one he had discarded. Close cropped heads with high cheek bones and narrow eyes were bent forward over games of cards. A ragged Montenegrin full of plum brandy was singing a wild song to a consider-

able group of hearers. University students were eating and gesticulating, or eating and playing cards at the same time.

Jaffer sat in a central part of the room for the better part of an hour. Covert glances were cast at him, but no one spoke to him. He heard any amount of talk, and not one word of it did he understand.

Consequently, on the way back to the Moskwa he hunted for a bookshop, and at last found one still open, and bought a phrase book of Croatian and English. The Cyrillic letters of Servian proper were too hard for him to read, but Croatian was essentially the same language, and printed in Roman type.

XXXV

BRIGHT and early Thursday morning Jaffer went out to breakfast. He was always an early riser, and coffee would be cheaper at the Green Wreath than at the Moskwa. He took his new phrase-book along, and into the pocket of his new suit he thrust Yukitch's manuscript.

At seven-thirty he entered the café. At that hour the place was almost deserted, and he chose a table for himself, in a corner — for man is a goniotropic animal. He took out his phrase-book and amused himself by trying to pronounce the stuff.

At a quarter to eight, when the deliberate waiter was pouring coffee for him, Jaffer noticed three young men come in, each carrying a handbag. Although there were plenty of tables empty, the boys mechanically made their way toward his; it was evidently their customary haunt. The waiter glanced round, embarrassed. Jaffer, however, arose politely with the phrase-book in his hand and read aloud with elaborate care. "*Veseli me, da ste tako tačan* — I am glad that you are so punctual."

Two of the young men turned away. The third, a tall, handsome, awkward boy of nineteen, laughed, carefully deposited his bag, and stood at Jaffer's right, looking over his shoulder at the book. Immediately Jaffer drew from his pocket Dr. Yukitch's manuscript, and handed it to the youth. "*Smijem li vas za jednu uslugu zamoliti* — may I ask a great favour? *Ja moram učite čim prije moguće* — I must take some lessons as soon as possible. *Mozete li mi preporučiti dobru učitelja* — can you recommend a good teacher?"

The boy laughed rather nervously, and began to translate the manuscript into excellent German, to the following effect: "The terrible filaria or teshta worm is unknown to my countrymen who at Botcha drink the crystalline waters of the Drina, or who at B.S. drink the sweet mountain spring of the Moschanitza." The youth stopped, glanced at the author's name, looked sharply at Jaffer, who was now seating himself again, and turned to his companions with a gesture of summons. They came, and one of them took the manuscript. "Yukitch!" he exclaimed, and seated himself at Jaffer's left. The translator thereupon took the seat at the right.

"Dr. Yukitch," said Jaffer, "spoke to me of Zeleni Vienaz as a place where I might find a friend."

Silence greeted this remark, but the third man now seated himself, at the end of the table, opposite Jaffer. He was a slight, swart, unsmiling fellow. His mass of hair was dark, his head longer than that of most Slavs, his nose straight and prominent. His eyes were grey, deep-set, and expressive.

The waiter brought more coffee and rolls, and all began to eat. While still eating, the boys began to smoke. But Jaffer did not light up. He proceeded to break the unfriendly silence.

"My name is Dr. Jaffer. It is not the name on my passport. You are at liberty to report me."

The big translator thawed at once. "We don't do any reporting, Dr. Jaffer. You may call me Ned. The man at your right is Trifko. The other man is —"

"Silence!"

Jaffer offered his hand to the boy at his left and the boy at his right, and ignored the boy opposite. He turned again to Ned.

"I am so ignorant of Bosnia that I do not understand even the first sentence that you translated. What town does Yukitch mean by B.S.?"

"Bosna Serai. That's the old name of Serajevo, the capital."

Still another cam clicked in Jaffer's brain. *Serajevo, June 28.* Saadi and Mohammed Beg would probably meet at that time and place.

"Thank you, Ned. If you will give me lessons in Servian, you may name your own price. I have been a student, and know what a little extra money sometimes means to a fellow."

"I can't do it, Dr. Jaffer. We are going away for a little trip, up the Danube. In fact, we are on the way to the boat now. But there is plenty of time, and I'll send some one to your hotel. The Obergymnasium is full of fellows who need money."

Jaffer nodded. "Thank you. Here in Belgrad you are not so lucky as I was in America. A professor gave me room rent free for two years."

The youth at the end of the table spoke slowly and bitterly. "I have been in Belgrad as long as that, and once Professor Markovitch invited me to dinner. The rest of the time I have fed here — with swine."

"Meaning me?" flashed big Ned.

"As you please," growled the dark, thin youth. "You are a chronic faultfinder, but there's nobody who's had so much help. It's not every poor devil who gets employed in a government printing office. What do you know about life, anyhow? You brag that you're proletariat, but you never climbed around, herding goats, holding your primer in your hand. You never knew what it meant to have no coat when the bora blew week in week out."

The third youth — Trifko — interrupted with sullen dignity. "Both of you had better keep still and let Dr. Jaffer talk."

"I infer," said Jaffer, "that you fellows know Yukitch."

"We don't know him," said Trifko, "but we know all about him."

"In that case you may know Saadi of Starigrad."

"I have met him when I was a little boy. Ned and Gavro don't know him. He lives in Vienna. He's dropped out." Trifko uttered his short sentences with smooth monotonous force.

Jaffer meditated. Finally he turned to the lowering youth at the end of the table. "Your friend has mentioned your name. Am I permitted to use it?"

"I suppose so."

"Then, Gavro, I should like to say two things to you. First, if I were your doctor, I'd order you into the open air for six months. It is none of my business, but if you don't let up a bit and get out a good deal, you are going to die of tuberculosis. Secondly, I'm going to write to Yukitch to-night. What shall I tell him about Bosnia?"

"Ask Trifko. He seems to know everything."

Trifko was much the calmest of the three men, but he leaned forward like a panther ready to spring. "Tell Yukitch that since he ran away things have been happening just the same. Tell him that the farmer doesn't have to get down off his horse to let a Turk pass — he doesn't have to because now he has no horse. Two years ago they changed the constitution so that the commanding-general has civil power. Potiorek does what he damn pleases — things worse than Vareschanin ever thought of doing. Tell him that last year every literary and athletic society was disbanded. Tell him that the constitution has been suspended for a year now, and we're declared to be in a state of siege. Tell him that every student from Trebinje to Tuzla is on strike. And then just add a postscript and tell him that the Pope's son in Pale called him a damned kukavitcha. That means coward."

Jaffer took out his note-book and entered the notes. He handed the book to Trifko, and Trifko viciously spelled out "kukavitcha" in Cyrillic letters.

"Where do you live when you're at home, Dr. Jaffer?" It was Ned who spoke, in his humorous, lively fashion.

"At Peshawar. I don't like the English any more than you like the Austrians."

"Did you have to get out?"

"No. I haven't been mixed up in anything."

Trifko spoke. "What would your family say if you were?"

"It would be hard on my father, for he holds a government job. My mother—well, you know what mothers are. They will do what they can to keep you from hanging—and afterwards come and gather up your bones."

Gavro's slender nervous hand clutched the edge of the table. He was wondering whether his mother would be able to prove, against the parish record, that he was born in June and not in July.

Jaffer resumed. "By the way, Trifko, I'm looking for Saudi. But you say he's in Vienna. Are you quite certain?"

"Oh, I don't know. You can go to Starigrad and inquire, but it is not an easy trip."

"How should I go?"

Trifko meditated. "You could go by way of Serrajevo, but I should not advise it. The place is only fifty miles south of there, but it is the wildest region in my country, and the roads are terrific. Go to Fotcha and inquire of the Moslems—not the Commandant. They'll drive you over. The castle is on the headwaters of the Drina or the Narenta—I forget which. The two rivers come pretty close together there."

"How do I get to Fotcha?"

"Go south. Take the train to Stolaz—not the

Stolaz in Herzegovina, where Saadi's dearest friend lives — but to Stolaz above Nish. Drive by way of Uzice to Vardiste on the border. Take the train to Ustipraca. From there by postwagon to Gorazda. From there to Fotcha by carriage."

Jaffer took out his note-book and jettied it all down.

Ned looked over the notes and corrected the spelling, as a proofreader might. "You won't need much Servian, doctor. There'll be a damned Schwab at every corner to watch you."

Gavro was regarding Jaffer narrowly. Suddenly he burst out in a harsh voice: "The only Servian *you* need to learn is two words — *Oteto, prokleta*."

"Ah, it rhymes," said Jaffer. "Potato, clay toe. Something about the soil."

"Yes, something about the soil! *Oteto, prokleta* — *what is taken by force is cursed*. And you knew the words as well as I knew them."

Jaffer shook his head. "You're mistaken, Gavro."

Gavro continued his penetrating gaze. "When do you expect to be in Vienna?"

"June twenty-eighth," said Jaffer, easily.

"You're lying, you damned spy."

"Take it back, Gavro!" cried Ned, rising like a great Newfoundland dog. But Gavro sat with narrow shoulders contracted, and nervous fingers slowly crushing his cigarette.

Jaffer concluded that it was time to smoke. He felt for his own cigarettes, found only the Stepanies, and lighted one. "It is quite true, Gavro, that I would be in Serajevo on Vidov Dan, if I could count on Mohammed Beg, who, as Trifko has so truthfully remarked, lives in Stolaz."

Gavro's eyes blazed. "Dr. Jaffer of Stamboul doesn't know Servian! Oh, no, he needs lessons!" Gavro swallowed hard, and seemed to gag. That peculiar irritability did not escape Jaffer's clinical eye.

"Let us not get excited," said Jaffer. "For the sake of argument, let us suppose that I do know Servian. Have a cigarette, Gavro, unless it will make you sick at the stomach." He stretched across the table, and placed the packet in the sinewy hand.

Gavro looked at the brand. "Who gave you this?"

"The Major," said Jaffer.

Gavro sprang to his feet and threw the cigarettes at Jaffer's head with a sure aim. "You tell the Major that we don't need any Turks. There are several others that we don't need. It was my idea, anyhow."

"I'm not so sure of that!" cried Ned, towering.

"Sit down, you fools," commanded Trifko in his monotonous voice, and Ned obeyed.

Gavro remained standing. "I'm going. Maybe you will find me at the boat and maybe you won't. Here's the money for my breakfast." He picked up his battered stiff hat from the floor and departed.

Jaffer rubbed the cheek where the packet had hit him. "I'm sorry, boys. I don't really know the Major. I was crossing on the ferry, and he accidentally knocked my Medidjehs into the brook, and gave me the Stepanies by way of apology. They aren't very good, but I should have smoked them if they had not reminded me of Saadi's little sister. Do you know about her?"

Trifko nodded.

"I never saw the Major before," continued Jaffer. "I don't know his name."

"I believe you," said Ned, awkwardly and nervously.

"I don't know what to think," said Trifko, slowly. "But I can state the situation. If you are one of Enver Bey's men, or one of Berchtold's either, you won't get out of Belgrad alive. If you are one of us, you are only half instructed. In either case, you had better take the oriental to-night for Vienna. I like you, and I am giving you good advice."

Jaffer reached over and took Trifko by the hand. "I assure you, on my honour, that I don't at all know what's up."

Trifko withdrew his hand. "Your honour is not enough. Assure us by your mother's honour that you won't go to the Austrian or the German or the Turkish legation."

"What happens to me if I don't promise?"

"You won't find Saadi." Trifko spoke very quietly, and was evidently understating the case.

Jaffer was silent for some time. His first impulse had been to seek out his diplomatic acquaintance and tell him that, in the opinion of a stranger from Kabul, Governor Potiorek's life was in danger. But as he reviewed the whole conversation, he saw that he had very likely been jumping to conclusions.

"You have my promise, on my mother's honour. And it includes letters, telegrams — everything you wish to specify. But I assure you that I am going to find Saadi. I shall stay in Belgrad three weeks and study Servian. Then I'm going to Starigrad by the route Trifko has indicated. I won't come to the Green Wreath again, if you advise staying at the Moskwa."

"We certainly do advise it, Dr. Jaffer. Stay indoors."

"Very good. If I don't find news of Saadi at Starigrad, I shall be at Serajevo on Vidov Dan. Ned, do I get my teacher?"

"I'll telephone him now," said Ned, and went off to do it.

Trifko and Jaffer sat in silence till he returned. Then the boys shook hands with their puzzling acquaintance and departed without a word.

Jaffer ordered another coffee, but did not drink it. He sat there wondering whether he ought to write to Dr. Trench. He guessed not. Whoever "Elsie" was, it would not especially comfort her to know that

her husband was a Bosnian. Much less would it comfort her to know of his acquaintance with men who were up to some political mischief. Ned was not really dangerous, and Trifko seemed well balanced. But the third man was too bitterly in earnest about something or other.

At all events he, Jaffer of Peshawar, had met another acquaintance of Saadi of Starigrad. And he would never have run across Trifko if he had reached Belgrad a day later, or the Green Wreath an hour later. Curious thing, kismet!

XXXVI

NEXT day Jaffer found himself in the hands of an expert. There was no time wasted. Ned's friend, a pale Bosnian youth and born scholar, taught him exactly what he would need at Fotcha, and in the gorges and tablelands beyond. What was wanted was not the ordinary guidebook stuff, but Servian for such odd phrases as this: "I am called Jaffer, my lord, and I come asking a boon," or "I am a friend of Saadi, my lord, and I bring news." Day after day the teacher came before Jaffer was really awake, heard his recitations, assigned new tasks, and left, only to reappear at seven o'clock in the evening. Of the three friends who haunted the Green Wreath he had little to say. He knew that Trifko's home was a few miles east of Serajevo, that Gavriilo came from the extreme west of Herzegovina, and that Ned was a big fellow who had a heart of gold, but who had been driven out of Serajevo for rash radical talk.

On the evening of Saturday, the thirtieth of May, a card was brought up. It bore a German name, but Jaffer declared himself not at home. He showed the card to his teacher, who seemed pleased when it was torn up and cast into the wastebasket. The lesson went on, and thereafter Jaffer received no more cards.

Each June day as he stood by the window conning his verbs, he studied the street to see if he was watched, and if so by what nation. But no sign of any spy, romantic or commonplace, appeared. Nor at meal times did any stranger pick an acquaintance with him, much less a quarrel. Belgrad might be the hotbed of

intrigue, but it showed no signs of raising any poisonous plant for him. So Jaffer took walks, ran out to Topschider, and got well rested after his long hard trip.

On Wednesday, the seventeenth of June, he parted with the pale Bosnian, having paid him double the price asked, and given him some good medical advice into the bargain. It was a bit lordly to be handing out Trench's money so freely, but he had never seen a man whom the little more would benefit so much.

Next morning at seven he took the train for the south, and vastly enjoyed the trip. He saw signs that the two Balkan wars had inflicted grievous hardships, but it pleased his democratic soul to mark the nature of Servian resources. These marvellous hills and vales might be famous chiefly for swine, but they would raise anything.

Jaffer tried his newly acquired talk on an Orthodox priest, or pope, who sat beside him in the train, and soon learned that his carefully spoken sentences could evoke more discourse than he could understand. But he gathered that few Servian farmers own more than ten acres, and he was assured on the honour of a priest that all Hungary is owned by forty men. Jaffer changed the conversation, saying that he was a Moslem — it was one of the first sentences he had learned — but that he had many dear friends among the Christians. No — he was not from Stamboul, but from the Far East, where Islam, he ventured to think, was purer. Whether because distance lends enchantment even to Islam, or whether Serbian priests are rather rationalistic, the bearded pope was pleased. He declared that it was not wise to be too national in religion — recognising only a Servian god in a Servian heaven, with Servian angels playing Servian music to him. There were Russian angels, he doubted not, and very likely angels from the Far East. The great thing in war or

religion was to have brotherly love. He took his New Testament from his travelling bag and showed Jaffer the passage in Old Slavonic—"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his brother." The pope nudged him. "His brother—you understand—his pobratim!"

The westward carriage trip was lonely, but it led through a magical valley beside a wonderful river, and Jaffer drank his fill of beauty. Nor did the beauty fade when, on Saturday, he found himself in Bosnia. Every type of surface, from Alp to meadow, and every type of verdure, from shadowy pines to bannered fields of maize. Vista faded into vista ever more tenderly as he made his way through lawny hills toward Fotcha.

Here, pursuing instructions, he found a Moslem who agreed to carry him farther, to the castle of Kadri Beg Tshengitch—a relative of Stepan by marriage—and at noon on Sunday, the twenty-first, he found himself gazing at that rather weak stronghold. His driver left him there, standing on the bank of a small stream, and drove off.

Not knowing how else to manage, Jaffer took off his shoes and stockings, put them in his valise, and waded across. The temperature of the water made him hope that he should find nothing deeper. As he dried his feet by atmospheric means, he observed the tower—the "Kula"—above him. It ended in a pointed roof, apparently shingled. It was a good sixty feet high, square, with a few narrow windows on each side, arranged for purposes of defence.

Jaffer put on his shoes, climbed the hill, presented himself at the gate of the great square enclosure, and demanded to see Kadri Beg. The aged Kadri Beg came, turban on head and cigarette in hand, and Jaffer bowed low, touching with fingertips his breast, lips, and forehead. The aged Kadri Beg sent a man to warn the women of the village that a visitor approached. The

aged Kadri Beg invited Jaffer in, and took him to his own quarters in a shingled cottage.

Hardly a word was spoken. Jaffer was offered water to wash in, and then was seated on the floor beside a very low table, with Kadri Beg opposite him. Food was brought, and Jaffer ate with particularity, using only his right hand. He was evidently under inspection, and he imitated his host with great care. There were no knives or forks or cups or glasses. Jaffer had a spoon for his thick soup, but he managed everything else with his fingers, even the sticky "sukburet," a sort of ragout. The vermicelli cooked in honey was stickier, but entirely to his taste. Kadri Beg had not said a word, nor had Jaffer, when at last another basin of water was brought, and soap! The servant presented them to Jaffer first, and Kadri Beg watched him. Jaffer went the whole length. He soaped out his mouth thoroughly, and though his gorge rose, his stock went up. Then came delicious coffee, and Jaffer found himself puffing at a tchibouk. The time had come for carefully chosen speech — Servian, helped out with Persian words.

"I am called Jaffer, my lord, and I come asking a boon."

"It is granted."

"I seek guidance to the Kula of Stepan Beg."

"That is no mastery. Five hours on a pony, four hours on a Turkish horse."

"Allah will reward my lord. I have heard of the fame of Tshengitch."—The remark was true enough, for the muezzin at Fotcha had told him, that morning.

"Naturally, but you do not speak Turkish."

"No, my lord, I come from the Far East. But I have heard. Tshengeri in Anatolia is the cradle of a family great these five centuries."

"Thirty pashas and viziers," said Kadri Beg, succinctly. "And to me all that is left is the village within these walls. Nevertheless, the Day will come."

Jaffer knew well enough the dreams of Pan-Islam, and he despised them as he despised this rank pipe he was trying to manage. "Stepan Beg," he said, at a venture, "cannot boast thirty pashas and viziers."

Kadri Beg smiled, much as a bitter-hearted, bleary-eyed old eagle might.

"In the oldest of the Medina suras there is a line that was meant for Stepan: 'War is prescribed to you, but ye shrink.' There is royal blood in Stepan, and had the courage of a flea, Moslem and Christian might rally to him now, as they will not rally to Nikolas or Peter. But you will find no royalty at Starigrad. You will find a farmer, a tanner, a bosom-companion of Christian kmets."

Jaffer set aside the tchibouk, and searched for a cigarette. As usual, he first found the box of Stepanies, which he would neither smoke nor throw away, but presently he rummaged out another brand.

Kadri Beg spoke in a less scornful tone. "A strange man is Stepan — a strange man, who would not join his youth to my age when we fought the Christian three and thirty years ago. Therefore it was his kismet to fight me, and my brother Dervish Beg, likewise my brother Omar."

"How then, O Kadri Beg, comes it to pass that the strange man still lives?"

"Again it was kismet. We ravaged his fields, we shut him up in his Kula. But who can storm the walls of Starigrad? And he had much grain stored. But that was not our kismet. Some Vila of the Zagorje, who comes by night to steal the hearts of maidens, fastened upon our Ila the love of young Stepan. Thus was the Vila revenged on all the Tshengitch, in that we had taken the better part of her name for the child. And now Ila is dead. Last summer she died, when scarcely Ramazan had passed. And her little daughter is dead these many years, and her son is a wanderer."

There was silence. "You will not think me like a beggar of Stamboul, my lord, if I set out this very hour? For I have news of the son to carry to the father."

"You shall go in peace. Horse and guide shall be ready on the minute, if not for the prophet's sake, then for Saadi's. There is a Tshengitch, proud and desperate, though from his father he learned to laugh. May Allah keep him long content in the East."

A question sprang to Jaffer's tongue, but did not pass the barrier of his teeth. Kadri Beg resumed.

"Will Jaffer again see Saadi in the East?"

"Such may be the will of Allah, my lord."

"Say to him that Kadri Beg sent this message: *The son of the Haiduk is grown, and Haidar has forgotten how to shoot.*"

Jaffer repeated the message, and hoped to thunder that it was the last piece of mystery he should have to remember. But the words set up a new anxiety within him, and it was worse than his anxiety about Saadi's character.

It was evening, and the sun had set, when Jaffer and his escort drew rein at Starigrad. It had been a hard ride, over country very different from the smiling valleys near the Servian border. The karst had begun; the pastures and fields were infrequent. The bridle paths had seemed to lead up and down, not ahead.

A little bridge of stone, beautifully arched. Beneath it the narrow, curving river, with three feet of water swift as a millrace. To the left, shut in by mountains, a polje or hollow of many acres, seemingly the bottom of an ancient lake, richly cultivated. To the right, across the stream, a solid cliff of karst a hundred feet high, though, had the light been better, Jaffer might have seen that the topmost ten feet were masonry. The short sharp curve of the river more than

half surrounded the castle above, where the great kula struck into the red evening like a javelin.

They crossed the little bridge, and Jaffer noted that the defile ahead of it was cleared of every rock which might serve as a hiding place. They mounted by a circuitous route to the tableland above. To the left now appeared the high stone wall and moat which, going straight across from cliff to cliff, isolated the castle on the impregnable promontory. In the centre of the wall was a great square gate-structure rising above it, and the doors of the Turkish arch were closed. But the draw-bridge was down — and evidently no longer used to be drawn up. They dismounted, and the guide pulled the bell-rope. It was five minutes before the guard appeared, recognised a friend, and let them in.

A few words of rapid speech and Jaffer was conducted to the master's house near the tower. Lights were burning in the upper story of it, as if the master were going to bed. But when the guard had disappeared within, like a butler carrying a card, Stepan Beg returned with him.

XXXVII

"SALAAM alêkom, Stepan Beg."

"Wa-alêkom salaam, Jaffer Hakim. Come up to the selamik. Haidar, see your friend well bestowed."

They mounted the narrow wooden stairs to the great room above. A quaint brass student-lamp gave it a moonlight effect. There were chairs and tables and divans, and a white porcelain stove with green panels. Upon the floor were fine old rugs. Upon the wall was a case of firearms of many patterns, both ancient and modern. Evidently there was one man in Bosnia who was exempted from the law, perhaps because he never broke it. On another wall was a case of books and manuscripts.

The two men stood looking at each other — Jaffer in his fez, with dark aquiline features sharpened by anxiety; Stepan Beg in a scarlet turban, with white beard close cropped, strong sinewy neck exposed, eyes sad but smiling.

"You stayed long with Kadri Beg?"

"Two hours, my lord. But there I learned"—and Jaffer bowed his head—"how Azrael brushed Stari-grad with his wings when Ramazan had passed. May the peace of Allah rest upon the soul of the Lady Ila."

A shadow of pain passed over the noble face, but the answer came quietly. "Sweet with firdousi was the apple of life which Azrael held to her nostrils."

Stepan Beg laid a kind hand on Jaffer's shoulder. "I have heard of you. I have had letters. You shall be Rasul here, and I am not your lord. Rest upon this divan. So — so, my son."

The old man gently forced the youth to lie down. Jaffer lay without speaking till the inevitable coffee came. He lay dimly realising that he had been speaking Persian, not Servian, and that he had been understood and answered.

A glass of water followed by a little cupful of black coffee seemed to go to the immediate focus of his various anxieties — an aching spot somewhere in the back of his neck. He rose to a sitting posture.

"It is the part of age to inquire, Stepan Beg, and the part of youth to answer. But may I ask and be blameless?"

"Ask many things, Rasul."

"These letters, how old are they?"

"Saadi wrote me six months ago that his room had been the room of Jaffer. He wrote me of other friends, but Jaffer I remember, for it is the name of the good vizier. And he wrote of Trench Hakim, upon whom be peace."

"And have there been no letters lately?"

"Yes, my son. He wrote for money. He had borrowed a certain sum from Trench — four thousand kronen. I have sent it from Serajevo — Haidar is but yesterday returned."

Jaffer was delighted, but pondered his next question.

Stepan Beg lifted his coffee to his lips, then set it aside. At last he said, quite calmly, "Does Rasul bring me word of Saadi's death?"

"Ustafr Ullah! God forbid! For aught I know, he flourishes like the vines in your garden."

Stepan Beg's breast heaved with renewed life. "Four thousand kronen is not enough to establish a home in the ends of earth. I have sent four thousand more to his bride, whose name I love. See, I have their good addresses — Isham Trench and Elsie Sereef." He lifted a leather bound book from the table.

Jaffer's relief was enormous. Saadi was neither thief nor seducer. From here on, the messenger might unburden his heart to this braver heart.

"I bring you good news, Stepan Beg. When the month of Dulheggia has come, you will be a grandfather."

Stepan Beg sat still, but great tears rose to his eyes. "Allah be praised! To Allah be great praise! But, alas, the boy will be born in America. It is farther away than paradise."

Jaffer rose and approached. "Some day he will come to you, O best of fathers. But now I must speak the truth. I bring the news not merely to the grandfather but to the father. I seek Saadi."

Stepan Beg sprang to his feet, stepped to the bookcase, took out a packet of letters, and swiftly opened several. "The last is written from Chicago, on the twentieth of April."

"He left on that date for Europe," said Jaffer. "He gave as a reason that his mother was dead."

Stepan Beg stared. Then he went to the latticed window and called into the night. A man came running, flung open the door of the house, and dashed upstairs, ready to throttle Jaffer. But he saw the two men standing quietly.

"Haidar, the moon is dead, and the new moon is not born. But could you go to Fotcha?"

Haidar glanced from one man to the other. "I need no moon, my lord."

Stepan Beg lifted a finger. "But if it were to Stolaz? Think, Haidar."

"I can go to Stolaz without a moon. I have done it — years ago — when the road was worse, and the whole band of Stojan Kovacevitch thirsted for my lord's blood."

Stepan Beg pointed to the case of firearms. "Take what you will. You must not be stopped by the patrol."

Say that you are on my service. Carry with you my Star of the Order of Franz Joseph. If they do not respect it, make them respect it. Bring hither young Mohammed Beg by this time to-morrow night."

Haidar went to the case and took what he needed — the Star, a six shooter, and a box of cartridges. He came before Stepan Beg, and knelt. But Stepan raised him to his feet and kissed him on either cheek. Then Haidar went out into the night, and within ten minutes they heard the great door clang behind him, and the hoofbeats of his Turkish horse resounding from the karst.

"No more to-night, Rasul. I see that you have brought more than news. You have borne anxiety on these young shoulders, and now you shall shift it to mine. Whose money brings you hither?"

"That of Dr. Trench. I come from Peshawar."

"The money shall be paid. You left Peshawar when?"

"April twenty-third."

"By railroad?"

"No, by camel. I went to Tashkent — and consulted Dr. Yukitch."

Stepan Beg gazed at him. "It is the work of a hero. Mohammed Beg, who is Saadi's sworn brother in God, could not have done more. To-morrow shall be a festival in Starigrad. To-morrow morning you must visit the houses of my people, and wield your magic in one or two — for some are ailing, and I do not bring the doctor from Fotcha every week. And now to bed, my brave lad — to Saadi's own bed. I will light you there."

And so by ten o'clock on the evening of June 21, Jaffer slept in Saadi's bed, as Saadi had slept in Jaffer's. He hardly stirred till seven in the morning, so knowing are the little grey cells of the brain when load of care is lifted.

At eight he emerged much refreshed and washed, and Stepan Beg received him kindly. They had coffee and melons and honey-cakes together in the selamlık, and then for a little time Jaffer was left to himself, having been invited to examine the books and manuscripts in the case on the western wall. He found many of them written in Glagolitic, and of very great age.

Later the two men went out into the June morning. A flock of doves followed Stepan Beg, lighting on his shoulders. "Their line is as old as mine, Rasul, and no one but a member of the family feeds them. They go back to a day when we were Christians, and there is I know not what meaning in them. They flock to Saadi as birds would flock to David. It is written in eight and thirty, which is called Sad."

They proceeded to the Kula and mounted by a circular stairway of stone, story after story, to the very top. Here was a comfortable room, with crenellated windows. Far below, to the south, appeared the polje which Jaffer had noted, a very Eden, and beyond it the buildings of a little tannery. Between the tannery and the polje lay the village, on both sides of the river. Jaffer noted a wooden bridge and a little Orthodox church. Beyond were the mountains of Montenegro. To the west stretched the karst, fantastic, grey, and forbidding. In the east the hills of Servia were visible. To the north, beyond miles of lower mountains, arose the snowpeaks of the Treskavitcha Alps. At the foot of the castle was the little stone bridge by which the northern road started for Serajevo.

"It is the Saadi bridge," said Stepan Beg, "and may the soul of the designer rest in peace. Four centuries ago my family abandoned the attempt to live here, and went to the Sandjak. The kula fell into ruins; the broken wall choked the river, and there was no village. Within fifty years the place was known

as Starigrad,* and it has never lost the name. Three centuries ago we were living almost like serfs in the Sandjak, but there arose among us a dreamer of dreams. It was he who longed for the old home, and believed that the lake could be drained. It was he who made his way to Stamboul, penniless, seeking an engineer. There he found Saadi of Isfahan, himself a dreamer of dreams, himself an exile. They returned together to Starigrad, and with Saadi's slender means they wrought the miracle. Here Saadi died, before the kula was rebuilt; but, dying, he left the plan for the bridge. Yonder he lies, among my people, and since his day there has always been a Saadi in our line, and the knowledge of Persian is kept alive among us."

They descended, and walked down to the village, Jaffer carrying such medical resources as he could muster. Holiday had been proclaimed, and the streets were full of cheerful people. The village was clean. By any standard, even a Dutch one, the village was clean, and that was a greater miracle than the draining of the lake. They went from house to house where the aged or the ailing were, Stepan Beg leading the way.

Jaffer found little to do that morning. There was not a case of tuberculosis, the scourge even of Herzegovina, in the whole place. He did find a very lame back, where a little weazened man had fallen down stairs. As he made his examination the little man quizzically asked him if he had ever fallen down stairs himself. Stepan explained that the kmet was making a sly reference to old Nasradin, the comic figure of Herzegovinian history, who had declined to have a broken rib set save by a hakim who had suffered from a broken rib.

At noon the whole village swarmed up to the castle, where, in the open, six fat sheep were roasting on spits.

* "Old Castle."

The baker brought a cartload of white bread. Baskets of melons and figs made their appearance. There was even a reasonable amount of red wine and plum brandy. Such gay apparel, with tinkling showers of ancient coins, Jaffer had never seen on women even at home.

After the feast the kolo was danced to shake it down. And as the evening drew on, the whole crowd gathered about the village minstrel to hear the songs of ancient days. There were no Turks present, and no Moslems save Stepan Beg and Jaffer, and the guslar knew his master well. The songs he sang were all of Prince Marko, who grieved that he must fight his own people at Kosovo, and who was willing to die for them. A mighty hero was Marko, slayer of Turks and avenger of wrongs. His mace was passing heavy of iron and silver and gold. He never died, but still sleeps in a cave, and will come again to unite all Serbians. There beside him is his sword, plunged into a rock up to the hilt, and when the appointed time is at hand, the sword will itself leap from the rock and Marko will awake. Exploit after exploit was sung, and the excitement grew intense.

Then suddenly the guslar rose and began the last of all, and Stepan Beg translated it for his guest, minute by minute. All in a magical moment Marko had become Marko Jaffer, who had set out from the ends of the earth to bear glad tidings to Starigrad. But Marko Jaffer was met by a mighty giant, Moosa India, and was struck down by a mountain. He threw it off, only to be plunged into a river. From this he struggled out and wielded his mace, but the monster was mightier than he. Then Marko Jaffer called for help in the name of Starigrad, and the saints appeared in the clouds above. St. Elijah hurled his thunder, St. Sava threw down snow, St. Mary of the Fire burned the monster's mace with lightning, St. Thomas dried up the river, St. Panthelmyion made the rocks to burn

beneath the monster's feet. The monster fled, and Peter and Paul descended with wine and bread to feed the fainting traveller and speed him on his way. And so came mighty Marko Jaffer to Starigrad in guise of a young physician, slender and beautiful, pretending to be a Turk but deceiving none. And here he uttered his glad tidings, that brave and laughing Saadi Beg had taken to himself a wife, fair Ilsa of the West, who soon would bear him a noble son to rule in Starigrad. Nay, more — here the guslar, a little grey man, assumed a rapt expression — within a few days perhaps, when Vidov Dan had come, Saadi Beg would himself return!

It was too late to correct that last little touch of rhapsody and vision, for the crowd went wild with joy. They raised the guslar and bore him on their shoulders. They crowded before Jaffer and kissed his fingers. They shook Stepan by the hand till the strong wrist ached. And Jaffer perceived, what before had not entered his head, that his news was of importance to more people than Stepan and Saadi.

When the sun had set and the villagers had descended to the valley, host and guest waited for the return of Haidar. But at midnight he had not come, and Stepan Beg was grave and silent.

XXXVIII

MORNING of the twenty-third broke fair and bright, but still no Haidar. The day wore on, Stepan making no comment, Jaffer busy with the books in the selamlík.

After dinner Stepan Beg left word where he might be found, and took Jaffer for a long walk to the north, to the ancient burial ground. Vast horizontal stones were there, such as Jaffer had noted elsewhere as he rode over from Kadri Beg's. But also there were scores of graves marked by pillars, many with tops like turbans to indicate the resting place of male Moslems. Beside a white new pillar that bore no turban, Stepan knelt and prayed. Then he approached one of the ancient monoliths, pointed out the inscription, and translated it. The name appeared in a depression, as if some older name had been chiselled away to make room for it. Thus it read:

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Here rests Saadi of Isfahan. He had neither father nor mother, nor son nor brother nor sister, only his sins. This stone has been erected over him by Voivod Stepan, who buried the saviour of Starigrad, invoking Allah Bog.

"A strange inscription, Stepan Beg."

"Yes, Rasul, yes, as strange as life itself. Here let us sit in the shadow of the tomb, and speak of it, for we shall not meet again on earth. It is clear that my ancestor buried Saadi in a Bogumil grave, lifting the stone that protected it against the wolves. Do you know of the Bogumils?"

"A mere name to me, my lord."

"Perhaps it should remain such. After all, the

young are not interested in these matters. Let us speak, rather, of the late wars. Both were wars of extermination. Southeast of here, in the district annexed by Bulgaria, four hundred thousand Turkish males out of seven hundred thousand were slain, and the process would have been completed had time permitted. Due south it was the same; Montenegro aimed at extermination. What else could you expect? The great powers had felt no duty to civilise the Balkans, but had egged them on these many years. In the second war Greece tried to exterminate the Bulgarians in Macedonia. If she dared, Austria would slay every male in the kingdom of Servia."

"Life hardly seems worth living in the Balkans," said Jaffer.

Stepan laid his hand upon the great monolith and brushed away some lichens from the inscription. "There have always been people who wondered whether life was worth living. Millions have slain themselves. And since the world was, many have refused to marry. Do you yourself expect to marry?"

"Yes, Stepan Beg. When I have finished my preparation for life."

"May Allah grant you peace. But many have found no peace, and have thought that some restless evil spirit made the world. I think of one such prophet — Mani. He was crucified at Bhagdad ten years before the bastard Constantine was born at Nish. You passed within a few miles of Nish, on your way here. In those days the religion of Mani and the religion of Issa strove to possess the world. But the son of the innkeeper's daughter became emperor, and Christianity conquered."

"I have heard of Mani. Did he not travel into India?"

"Even so, preaching that there is but little light in a dark world, and that it is better that our race should

cease. Thousands heard him gladly, and thought that his doctrine was that of Issa. Mani thought that Issa was an angel of light in the form of a man, and that he neither married nor truly died. Hither into Thrace came the followers of Mani, and Theodora put a hundred thousand of them to death."

Jaffer shrugged his shoulders. "They got what they wanted, Stepan Beg."

Stepan stroked his close trimmed beard, and proceeded. "My ancestors were Christian nobles in Servia. They listened to the preaching of Bogumil, the beloved of God, who brought the doctrine of Mani from Thrace. It appealed to us who were sad with knowledge. We broke away from the church, declaring that all its mummery was the work of Satan, and that it is better not to bring children into so bad a world. Stepan Nemanya drove my family into Bosnia about seven hundred years ago. Other Bogumils were already here, but many had followed up the Danube or along the sea-shore to Venice, and these became the first protestants of Bohemia, and Switzerland, and Italy. We who remained built strongholds in the mountains, and resisted the Hungarians whom Rome sent to annihilate us. We wished to die out, but we did not wish to be killed off."

Jaffer could not help laughing. "You ended by doing neither, Stepan Beg."

"Who can say? Go where you will in Bosnia or the Duchy, you find one vast graveyard of such stones as this. Thousands of us died celibate."

"That made the rest an easier prey for the Turk, Stepan Beg."

"It is true. But the persecution was what weakened us most. Europe has yet to pay for slaughtering her most enlightened men. Europe invited the Turk."

"And did he not in turn persecute the Bogumils?"

"No, Rasul. He saw that our creed was like his

own, free from idolatry. It was no great effort for us to embrace Islam, and we resigned ourselves to the desire to live."

Again Jaffer could not restrain gentle laughter.

Stepan Beg entered into the spirit of it. "We even resigned ourselves to make life very hard for the Christian. We never treated our peasants as unkindly as born Turks did — as unkindly, for instance, as my nearest neighbours, the Tshengitch. But we have duly helped to keep the peasant down, and taught the Austrian how to do it. My father died fighting the Christian insurrectionists in '76, and in '82 I had to fight my neighbours for refusing to join them against Austria. But I was justified by events. Hard as the Austrian is, he was the next step to take. He has made travel safe for you, my son."

"The man of peace has a hard time of it," said Jaffer.

"Too hard for me to understand. I cultivate my polje and think about it, but I do not understand. Young men wish to slay, and so Allah lets them be slain. My ancestors prayed to be delivered from war and marriage, but Allah granted only half the prayer. He sent them war, which is indeed the great preventer of marriage. Allah foils us at every turn, my Rasul. Now that our unmarried boys have been slain for centuries, you would think that only women would be left. But it is not so. Bosnia and the Duchy swarm with men who can find no wives."

"Saadi has found one, my lord, and I note that it gives you pleasure."

"You say rightly, my son. Our Saadi will do better things with Starigrad than I have been able to do. Perhaps you know the lady Ilsa. She must be a friend of Trench Hakim's wife."

"Dr. Trench is not married, my lord, nor have I seen Saadi's pearl."

"Not married! Is Trench a Bogumil? Bear to him this message: The Servant of Starigrad greets the revered teacher of the Son of Starigrad where he sits in the garden of learning, and bids him know that the great Experiment has failed. The battle of Bog with Shaitan must be won sangar by sangar, ell by ell, generation by generation. But when all these dying nations have reached the set hour, as it is written in Sura seven — our sons shall see peace on the earth."

"I have borne many messages on this strange journey, my lord, and have many yet to deliver. But none is so precious a burden as yours."

"In turn, my son, I must call you well named.— I am sorry that Haidar comes alone."

Jaffer looked up and saw a man limping towards them. Stepan went forward to meet him, and Jaffer followed.

"Mohammed Beg is in Serajevo, my lord. Here is his house address. Have I done wrong not to bring him?"

"No. You have done right to bring me Haidar back alive. You limp. Was there shooting?"

"No, my lord. But in the dark we did not see the slide of rock that lay across the road. Sharats stumbled and flung me over his head."

"And Sharats?"

"The rocks were slippery. He could not regain his feet. He went over. I lay long to hear some cry from below, but there was only the noise of the stream."

Stepan put an arm around the shoulders of his retainer. "We will not speak of another horse, or of returning the revolver. But the guslar knew Sharats, and the guslar shall sing of him. And there shall be mention of Haidar the faithful, who limped through darkness home."

"To Stolaz, my lord. The Basitch gave me a horse

to return on. One of them has set out for Serajevo to send the boy hither."

Stepan Beg knotted his brow. "That we will think of later. You are pale, Haidar. Here, between us, quickly, with an arm on each man's shoulder. Praise Allah that the Hakim is with us."

The three men made their way back to the castle, and Jaffer attended to the injured knee. Twenty miles of limping had done it no good.

Later, in the selamlik, Stepan Beg spoke to his guest. "If Mohammed Beg comes, he will be here to-morrow night. If he knows where Saadi is, and wishes me to know, he will come. If he does not know, or if there is mischief brewing, he will not come. Saadi is still young, and there is Tshengitch blood in him."

"Stepan Beg, I have kept back something. I have reason to believe that Saadi and Mohammed will meet in Serajevo on Vidov Dan."

Stepan Beg merely nodded. "If you have kept back still more, let it rest beneath the stone of forgetfulness. If Mohammed Beg fails to appear, you shall bear from me a signed note to the Landeschef, Potiorek, with two words—'Remember Vareschanin.' These words you do not understand, or need to understand. Meantime, I beg you to give your best attention to Haidar."

So it came to pass that for the next four and twenty hours Jaffer bent over Haidar with healing applications. Mohammed Beg did not come. On the morning of the twenty-fifth, doctor and patient were ready to set out for the north.

"It is better that I remain here," said Stepan Beg. "Who knows what nonsense Allah is permitting? The walls of Starigrad are strong, and there is room for all the village, and for you and Saadi and Mohammed Beg." He laughed, and some spark of long concealed, hereditary fire flashed from his eyes. "But go in the

safety of God, my boy, and may there be no need to return. Your praises are safe with the guslar forever, and within ten days a thousand kronen shall be sent to Trench Hakim for the expenses that his messenger has borne. As soon as you reach town, carry this note to the Koniak. It will not be necessary to insist on a personal interview. Potiorek would only detail a man to watch you."

XXXIX

ON Saturday morning, the twenty-seventh of June, the two horsemen emerged from the canyon of the Zeleznitza into the plain of Ilidze. They had slept in a friendly cottage at Madzari — to the sound of rain on the roof, but now the sky was clearing.

“Ah, Haidar, this looks less like the infernal regions. How far is it now?”

“You will be in Serajevo by noon, my lord.”

“Stop milording me, Haidar. When we get there, I am going to put your knee to bed in the best hotel. Which one is it?”

“The Europa. But the hakim will not put me to bed. From here he proceeds alone. I spend the night at Dobrinje, and he will find me here to-morrow, by the cross-roads. And there will be another horse, in case he brings a friend.”

“Nonsense, Haidar. You must come with me, if only to bring back this good beast of mine.”

“No, Hakim. It is Stepan Beg’s command. Two nights I sleep at Dobrinje. If you are not here by noon on Monday, I am to go home, and the Europa falls heir to your horse.”

There was no shaking Haidar, and Jaffer rode on alone. It was three o’clock when he came into Bistrik, the southern part of the city, and looked down on the old town with the river flowing through it like a blue vein. Golden Serajevo! The Damascus of Europe! But the minarets gleamed fairer than the churches, as if to say that some journeys to Damascus fail.

He descended, and crossed the old Catholic bridge,

and easily found the hotel. He gave his horse to be stabled and fed. He washed up. Then he inquired his way to the governor's palace across the river, and walked there, and gave in Stepan Beg's note. It was marked "Immediate," and Jaffer thought it unnecessary to add spoken words.

Then he went to the address given him, and inquired for Mohammed Beg. The maid servant thought he would be home for supper, and Jaffer promised to call in the evening.

Things having progressed so far and so well, Jaffer reminded himself that he had sent no word to Dr. Trench except by Dr. Yukitch. Really it was time to communicate something or other. So he walked back to the Koniakgasse and gave in the following:

Hope to find man to-morrow. Have met his father. I think better of human nature.—R. R. J.

On being required to give his address and name, he gave the Europa and the name on his passport. The operator began to click his instrument, but as soon as Jaffer had gone out he stopped and laid the message aside for military inspection, because "R. R. J." did not tally with the sender's name.

Jaffer now felt free to wander. It was five o'clock, and he had had no dinner. Supper was not yet ready at the Europa, but he remembered Dr. Yukitch's remark about the Café Bendbashi, and inquired his way thither. He crossed once more to the north bank of the Milyatska, and walked up the Appel Kai past the Rathaus, to where the river curves beneath the citadel. Here he found the café, and descended into it through a sort of tunnel. It was a beautiful place — hung with pictures, carpeted with rugs, fitted with coffee services of beaten brass and with every variety of smoking apparatus. But there was a garden beyond, and Jaffer penetrated into the garden. It was altogether nice.

Many a group could sit here by the swift clear stream, and have perfect privacy.

Jaffer lingered for an hour, resting his limbs, eating such kickshaws as the place afforded, inhaling the fragrance of real Mocha, and watching five children who were splashing in the water on the other side of the stream. He heard voices near him in the shrubbery, and caught the Serbian words for "One, two, three, four, five." Somebody was counting the children on the opposite shore. Presently the speaker emerged, a tall blond man, followed by two swarthy youths. The trio passed out. Left quite alone now, Jaffer laid his arms on the little table, laid his weary head on his arms, and took forty winks while the river rippled by.

On leaving the Bendbashi he wandered east, down the stream past the Kaiser bridge, the Latin bridge, and the Cumuria bridge, where stood a school for girls. He wandered through crooked lanes to the National Bank, where two streets merge into one. He wandered back to the Europa, and ate some real supper. After this he went again to call on Mohammed Beg. Mohammed Beg had not come in.

That night Jaffer slept like a log, undisturbed by a muezzin who started up in the middle of the night within a hundred feet of his window. It was nine o'clock, June 28, 1914, before he went down to the café of the hotel.

While the waiter was getting coffee and rolls for him, he overheard some people talking in German, and learned that the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary and inspector general of the army, was expected in town within an hour!

The news struck into him, deep, like a seizure of sudden illness. Was it possible — that in April Saadi had been summoned by his sworn brother in God to meet him on this day to carry out some deadly attempt

on the life of the Crown Prince? Was it possible that those Belgrad boys were also in the plot? Jaffer pushed aside his untasted breakfast. His first impulse was to run to the Koniak, but he reflected that Stepan Beg's note ought to cover the case so far as warning was concerned. Now it remained to find Mohammed Beg and find him quickly.

He left the hotel and hurried to the little house where the youth from Stolaz lived. The door was closed and locked. People were moving from every direction south, toward the Appel Kai, to see the Crown Prince pass as he came in from Ilidze.

Jaffer was in despair. He walked through crooked streets swiftly but aimlessly. He began to feel faint, and stood still awhile. The faintness passed, only to be succeeded by a gnawing sensation in the solar plexus. He had passed a confectioner's shop. He would go back and see if the place was open on Sunday. That gnawing was not wholly unnatural, considering that he had eaten nothing since half-past six the evening before.

He turned round, but had taken no step, when he noticed several men emerging from that shop. Each wore in his buttonhole the Serbian tricolour. One of them was very tall, boyish, awkward, handsome. It was unmistakably "Ned," who, as he walked, was tucking away a newspaper into the breast pocket of his coat. Jaffer stepped into an alley and watched.

Ned, Trifko, Gavro, all going south, and followed by several younger fellows. Then came the two swarthy youths he had seen yesterday at the Bendbashi, now proceeding east. Last of all, the tall blond man, walking directly towards him. Jaffer waited till the tall man passed, and he noticed that the thin face was drawn and set. Jaffer stepped out and followed, lighting a cigarette with steady fingers. The gnawing at the pit of his stomach was gone.

In a deserted street the leader entered a little gate. Jaffer gave him two or three minutes to get settled, then opened the gate and advanced through a garden to the house. He was about to ring the bell, but withdrew his hand. He opened the door, glanced into an empty room at the right, heard voices upstairs, and went up. There he stood, like a burglar, listening. An angry conversation was going on, too swift and muffled for him to understand, even had he known twice as much Serbian. But two or three times he distinctly heard the word "Saadi," with a pause after it.

Jaffer knocked on the door, and the voices stopped. Then one called out, "Nasto ze tuzite?" Jaffer understood that. It meant, "What's the matter with you?"

"Nothing much," said Jaffer in English. "I have just come to make a call. Dr. Trench asked me to drop in on you."

"It is damn lie. I do not know voice."

"Perhaps not. But you remember your cat's name."

An amazed oath followed. Then the voice said very sweetly, "Well, Jaffer, you may drop in on me, but you must not drop on shoulder."

Jaffer gently pushed the door and stepped in, and the door slammed shut. Saadi stood with his back against it, levelling a murderous Browning at the blond man.

It was rather a tense moment. Saadi did not look at Jaffer, but Jaffer more or less brilliantly remarked: "I hope you are well."

"Always well, same as Shaitan," answered Saadi, reaching out a left hand to be shaken. "Jaffer, you are remarkable pussycat and then some. How much you know about this fool business?"

"I know Ned and Trifko and Gavro, and I know this gentleman's two friends by sight. He counted one,

two, three, four, five naked children for their benefit at the Bendbashi last evening."

Saadi laughed. "Not kids, Jaffer, but motions when chucking bomb. It is kismet. Gentleman I am pointing out to you with nose of gun is Professor Ilitch. Professor, you don't understand English"—here Saadi shifted to German—"and my friend Dr. Jaffer doesn't know Serbian, so we will all talk German most damnably rapid."

The blond man smiled a flickering smile. "Your friend is too late."

"Maybe. My other one isn't. Mohammed is on his way to Montenegro. I found him fifteen minutes ago, standing where you put him, and he had sense enough to give me his Browning and start."

Ilitch shrugged his shoulders. "I wish Trisitch had never introduced him to me."

"What do you mean? He's only a kid, and you're a man. He was ready to quit when he got my letter—only he wouldn't go back on his word to you."

Ilitch again shrugged his shoulders. "My impression is that he mentioned the thing first."

"What if he did! It had been on his mind for three years, and he got the idea from me. But I've learned something in three years, Ilitch, and my letter to you made it clear that the thing couldn't be done without a smashup from Paris to Pitjer."

"You didn't prove it, Saadi. We don't expect to involve Servia. What we do expect is a prompt uprising of Croatia, Dalmatia, Slavonia, Bosnia, and of course the Duchy."

"You fool!" cried Saadi. "Haven't I come from Belgrad? Didn't I leave a part of my collar in the Major's hands? Don't I know that the boys can be traced to Tuzla? Didn't I visit their host Misko and his damfool picture-show? And you talk about not involving Servia! Good God, man! Ever since Buka-

rest, Austria has been waiting for the first chance. She privately informed Germany and Italy on August ninth."

"But they can't prove it, Saadi. The blame will fall on Budapest. The boys are going to take cyanide. The dead tell no tales, and every one of them is a hero."

"If you mean Gavro," exclaimed Jaffer, "he will throw up any poison that he takes — even cyanide."

At this moment the sound of rapid footsteps was heard, and a boy of sixteen burst into the room. Saadi lowered the gun, but the boy hardly noticed him. "Mr. Ilitch," he cried, "Nedjelko has thrown and never touched him. It exploded under the next auto and hurt a lot of people. Ned jumped into the river in front of the girls' school, and Mr. Lojo jumped in after him and held on to him, and the gendarmes have got him."

Jaffer took the boy by the arm and marched him across the room to where Ilitch stood. Saadi grinned with joy.

"Thank you, doctor. Stand very still, little boy, close to the professor, or this gun will go off and scare you. Now, Ilitch, it is yet half an hour to do something while the party is in the Rathaus. Where are the boys?"

"Gavro is by the Latin bridge, on this side. Trifko is on the Kaiser bridge. Vaso and Cvetko are at the bank, near where Mohammed Beg was. You don't know any of them but Trifko, and you can't budge him."

"But you can, Ilitch. Take pencil and write four notes, and send the kid with them. Write, 'Route changed, come here quick.'"

"I won't do it, Saadi. When I got your letter, I was in doubt, and told the boys so. But war with Servia is nothing. It will be localised like the last two wars."

"Fool!" cried Saadi; "you are journalist, but nothing reaches you. I went from Chicago straight to Petersbourg. I tell you it will be war for whole world. Write!"

The plucky Serbian messenger spoke up: "I won't carry any notes."

"I will," said Jaffer. "And permit me to remark that if they have caught Ned alive, they will learn the whole story. Gavro can hold his tongue, but Ned can't."

"Then write, Ilitch!"

"You must excuse me, Saadi."

"Then I'll kill you."

"You'll hang for it."

"Of course. I shall do that anyhow. Write!"

Ilitch shook his head, and it was all that saved his life. The bullet knocked his fez off and flattened itself against the wall. The messenger boy shrank into the corner.

Whether it was the deafening report, or fear of Saadi, or fear of Ned's tongue, Ilitch yielded. He drew from his pocket a note-book, tore out four leaves, and wrote. Jaffer took the scraps of paper and left.

The two boys at the bank were easily found and went with the silent Peshawari. He saw them safely inside and disarmed, and placed their weapons on Saadi's person. Then he went south, and at last found Trifko on the crowded Appel Kai. He had left the Kaiser bridge on hearing the bomb.

Jaffer drew him aside into an alley. "I told you you might see me here. Ilitch wants to speak with you at once. Here's his note."

"Ilitch is not my master," said Trifko. "What is this change of route?"

"I don't know, but he seemed anxious."

"Well, I'll go. I've been trying to find Gavro. It

is an awful responsibility we're taking, Dr. Jaffer. I'd be glad of an excuse —"

And Trifko went his way. He had hardly gone when the crowd began to cheer, and two or three automobiles appeared, coming west along the river. Jaffer tried to buck the line, only to get wedged in.

But he was much taller than the Bosnians, and could see perfectly. The first car, as he learned from remarks of those about him, carried the Burgomaster and the Royal Commissioner of Serajevo. Next to the chauffeur of the second car sat a hard faced man whom Jaffer guessed to be Governor Potiorek. Behind him appeared the nodding plumes of the Crown Prince's helmet, and beside the prince, on the running board, stood an aristocratic officer, as if to shield the prince with his own body.

But at the right of the prince, and therefore nearer to Jaffer, sat the Duchess of Hohenburg, a summer-like figure. Jaffer noted the tall black pompon in her white hat, the pearls about her throat, the roses in her belt, the fur cloak which she wasn't wearing, but which she might need to pull up round her shoulders later in the day. Beside her fluttered a little tricolour flag, as if to say, "She is Slavonic, and she thinks all Slavs dear and good and friendly." The car was moving very slowly, and Jaffer smilingly struggled to get his arm free that he might salute. The quick eye of the Duchess caught the smile and the movement, and she turned to her husband. Instantly Franz Ferdinand raised his hand to his helmet, his little eyes half closed with amusement, and as Jaffer disengaged his arm and returned the salute, the Duchess bowed. Her smile was almost a laugh, so pretty and genuine that Jaffer immediately vowed that she ought to be Empress. What a shame that the laws of "Ebenbürtigkeit" ruled her out.

The first car reached the corner of Franz Joseph

Street, about a hundred feet from where Jaffer stood. It turned to the right, then stopped, and proceeded along the river. But the manœuvre had halted the car of the Crown Prince, and as it stood there for a few seconds, a shot rang out. Then another. There was a great scuffle and confusion, and the car moved on, turning to the left over the Latin bridge.

Apparently the shots had gone wild. The crowd swayed. Though jammed against the wall, Jaffer caught a glimpse of Gavro as he was dragged along by the gendarmes. The boy's hat was gone, his face was covered with blood, and his mouth was open, as if with mortal sickness. As the crowd began to follow the prisoner, and the jam yielded, Jaffer made his way out and hastened to the rendezvous.

It was a roomful now, with Saadi holding them all at bay. Trifko was standing there with the rest, his arms held high, according to instructions, and Saadi was compelling all to listen while he went over the political situation. It was evident that he had made an impression, and Trifko looked relieved in more than a physical sense when Jaffer disarmed him.

"Gavro," said Jaffer, "has fired and been arrested. I don't think he hurt anybody, and the game is up. I wish to assure Trifko that I have not broken my promise, and I hope that the gentleman who showed me how to get here will be able to get back to Belgrad."

The words had hardly left Jaffer's lips when another boy dashed in, gasping. "He killed them both, Mr. Ilitch!"

"You mean Potiorek?"

"No! The Duchess!"

A piteous silence fell upon the room. Saadi began to take the cartridges out of the three revolvers, and Jaffer relieved Saadi's bulging sash and pockets of four bombs that looked like lumps of soap. Saadi was the first to speak.

"Let the younger fellows take these things, and go home, and give them to their mothers to get rid of." He gave two boys a burden, and they went.

"You are safe from us, Saadi Beg," said Trifko, "but you are not safe."

"I know it, boy. I was recognised last night at Ilidze. I was there because I thought you would operate there. I've done my damndest to find you all. I've been clear to Oblaj and then to Hadsisi to find Gavro, and to Pale after you, and to Zenitza after Ned, and missed you all. I must try now for Starigrad. Who comes with me? You?"

"No, Saadi Beg. I must go to Pale."

"Don't! Don't stop at Pale. They will catch you sure as fate."

"I must say good-bye to Mother."

"All right, then. I'd do the same thing myself. But keep to the Planina and don't enter Vishegrad. Good-bye, boy."

Saadi dropped his fluent Serbian and turned to Jaffer, speaking Halsted dialect as he understood it. "Good-bye, Jaffer, good-bye, good-bye, and give love to Doctor and all boys. You brave old son of gun, I would give half of world to send letter by you to girl in Chicago, but you must not be seen with us. Go to hotel and go to bed."

Jaffer's black eyes flashed. "If I were as inhospitable as you are, I'd walk over and ask Potiorek for a bed in jail."

Saadi reached up and chucked him under the chin. "You dead game old sport, we will see! We will see if there is room in Starigrad for Old Sleuth aus Peshawar! Come on, Jaffer! If we get there alive, we will play whole bunch is with us. Deland can preach to kmets and play on guzla. Ameen can talk Persian with Papa. Wu can put on specs and look for blastomycosis in vil-lage. Becker can sit on top of kula and wish he owned

whole damn landscape. And Chat — well, Chat can try to prove assassination is only bad dream.”

Jaffer, mollified, thanked him and accepted.

Meantime all the boys had stolen away except one. He lingered to shake hands with Saadi and introduce himself. “I wish you had come earlier, Saadi Beg. I had heard before that Franz Ferdinand was a friend of the Slavs, but I didn’t believe it. You know he wouldn’t let Red-Cross supplies come through. But when I saw him coming along so devil-may-care — for I was with Ned before I went to the Bank — I simply couldn’t shoot or throw.”

“You’re all right, Cvetko. Where do you live?”

“In Semlin. I’m only at school here. My father and mother —” Cvetko stopped, his lips quivering.

“Yes, yes, old man. I know about fathers and mothers. Now haidee, Cvetko! Get to them as quick as quick. What are you going to do with the toys?”

“Put them in the cellar of the Kostich house. Good-bye, Saadi Beg, and may we meet again — ako Bog da!”

“Ako Bog da! — if God grant it,” echoed Saadi, and Cvetko was gone.

“Haidar is waiting for us at the crossroads, Saadi.”

“Haidar! What you know about Haidar!”

“I have been to Starigrad, Saadi Beg Sereef Stepanovitch Etcetera. And your excellent father sent a signed message by me to Potiorek. It contained just two words: ‘Remember Vareshanin.’ And Potiorek evidently scorned it.”

Saadi shook his head. “Franz Ferdinand would not care for what Potiorek said. Franz Ferdinand was little bit off trolley. It was old trouble coming back and getting busy with central nervous system. I will tell you about it sometime. But my God I am sorry for his babies. Sophie, Maximilian, Ernest! Once in Chicago — with Deland — I did see them sitting in

church." Saadi stood with veiled eyes, lost in vision. He softly murmured, "On papa and mamma be peace."

Jaffer touched him on the shoulder. "Are we wasting time?"

Saadi roused himself instantly. "Suremike. Well, Haidar is at crossroads. How many horses?"

"There will be one for you, and mine is at the Europa. I can have a third sent here, if you say so."

Saadi turned to Ilitch. "Will you come, professor? It is only little walk from Starigrad to Montenegro."

"I don't run away, Saadi."

"Better get the habit. Slip around to London and Zürich and Budapest, and I will pay the bills. In Budapest you will be scolded by Tisza, but he is honest old Calvinist and will not let you starve. As soon as war begins, he will give you Golden Cross of Merit for journalistic achievements."

"Save your sarcasm," responded Ilitch. "There is no need to drag Tisza or anybody else into this business. Look to your own safety. You are going to have trouble in getting to Dobrinje."

"I suppose so, I suppose so. Inshallah, I will show Jaffer trick or two! And now it is time to say good-bye. You know I did not enjoy pulling gun on you."

"Don't mention it, Saadi. I — almost wish you had done it a month ago."

"Well, Ilitch, we both did what we thought was best. I will say this for you — boys obeyed you as if they were in school, and Serbian boys are not very obedient. Good-bye, old man. It is crazy world, and they will hang you, but you must not mind little thing like that. *Sbogom! Do vidjenja! See you in jail.*"

XL

As they emerged from the house, Saadi drew Jaffer aside. "Go to Europa, and pay bill and say man will come for horse. Is it any Muhammedan clothes in your bag?"

"Yes, an old suit and a new one."

"Put on oldest and put others in dirty bundle. Come with bundle to big mosque — Husrev Beg."

Jaffer obeyed orders, remarking to the clerk at the hotel that he was not enjoying Serajevo, and was going into the country to find peace. The clerk replied that he could blame no guest for doing so; already the mob was attacking Serbian shops and throwing the wares into the streets.

At the mosque Jaffer found Saadi under the old sycamore. "We go now into crowd and cross river by Bendbashi. It is not any use to try to get by railroad station. We will try to get past Koniak and go up mountain. You are pilgrim. I wish you were more dirty — here, I will wash hands and face for you with good dirt, so! Well, if any gendarme arrests me, scoot. Drop bundle and scoot! Dear Jaffer, is it what you say impossible to exaggerate how fast you must scoot. Imagine Dr. Trench is in mountain with nine babies bleeding to death for want of your shirt to tie up little legs. When you are lost in mountains — all lost as possible, Jaffer — hire kmet to guide to Starigrad."

"Very good, Saadi. But I shan't drop the bundle. It has a canister of tea for the doctor."

They walked in leisurely fashion down Saratchi Street, Jaffer carrying his own bundle. They bought

a dozen rolls, and Jaffer ate one as he slouched along, trying to feel like a pilgrim. They reached the Rathaus, and Saadi calmly approached a gendarme and asked him if there was any truth in the report that the assassins came from Belgrad. Twice he found it advisable to execute the same manœuvre again before they reached the other side of the river. Near the Koniak he did not wait to be halted, but addressed the first pair of gendarmes and informed them that the only way to get any peace from the accursed Serbs was to spend the night at the shelter house on Mt. Trebevitch.

This was the critical moment. The bodies of the Crown Prince and his Duchess lay within eight hundred feet, and the orders were strict. For that matter the orders are always strict about Serajevo, which is surrounded by a ring of concealed fortifications, and persons leaving the main highways have been fired on at sight. The guard ordered them back. Saadi flew into a rage. "If I go back," he said, "my first job will be to smash Tankossitch carriage factory, and I will say that you told me to go ahead. Tausend Teufel! I promised to see the Pilgrim out of town. He returns from the tomb of Gul Baba in Budapest, and the accursed Serbs make Serajevo a hell for him."

The guard hesitated, but repeated the command. Saadi sank upon his knees before the turbaned tower of melancholy called Jaffer. "Farewell, holy Hadji. Give me your blessing." Jaffer slowly extended his arms and bestowed an Afghan benison, adding a few well chosen Persian words. In fact, he bestowed so many, and kept on bestowing, that Saadi began to weep. The gendarmes grew tired of so much religion, and ended by letting them both pass.

Four hours later, having dodged forts and folks, they reached the shelter house, and got something to drink. Not a word of the trouble down below had reached those heights, but Saadi made the story very clear. Serajevo

was no place for a pilgrim. The noble Hadji had frowned and turned his back upon it.

Not until darkness made going unsafe did the fugitives pause again. Saadi stood leaning on Jaffer's shoulder, surveying the horizon. There they stood, drawn together from the ends of earth, two cells in the web of life. Stars were coming out. Earth was no longer blindly busy to improve the shining hours of one bright particular star, but was beginning to notice those about it. But even as they gazed, clouds gathered till the sky was all welkin.

Silently the two men found a sheltered place among the rocks, gathered withered stalks, and made a friendship fire.

"Now we will talk. Oh, my Jaffer, you are wonderful as Devil himself. Did Chat give you message? Did you go to Tashkent? Only one man in Tashkent knows Saadi."

"I found him. Now read what I have for you."

Jaffer opened his raiment and extracted from his money-belt a letter addressed in a feminine hand, "Aux soins de Dr. Jaffer." Having delivered it at last, he took his sharp Afghan knife from the sheath and daintily split a roll, and held it on the point of his dagger over the flame.

Saadi leaned forward by the friendship fire and read. Jaffer calmly shifted the position of the toast lest his companion's shapely head should knock it off the dagger. Suddenly Saadi pressed the paper fiercely to his lips.

"God in heaven! Son, Jaffer, I shall have son!"

"It is a pleasure to be the first to congratulate you. Will you have a piece of toast?"

"No, no! Eat, Jaffer. Play it is wedding cake! Oh, Elsie, you are Mecca and Mecca's eight kinds of honey! But —"

"But what?"

"I am not much of doctor. I never guessed."

Jaffer bit into the toast. "Spare your blushes, Saadi. I suppose that even doctors have some natural sense of delicacy. Had you made up your mind to remain in Chicago?"

"Yessiree. Soon I was going to tell Dr. Trench. But always something was hanging over me. My promise!"

"With Mohammed Beg?"

"Yes, Jaffer. We had sworn to kill Franz Ferdinand. But I had bad record. I went from Vienna to America because already I was suspected."

"And there you lost your nerve?"

"No, Jaffer! But there I got word about Archduke. Long I knew — all boys in University knew — that he had same trouble that killed his brother. They both got infection at same place, Göding, up on river March. But Franz seemed awful strong. When he stole Bosnia I hated him for strongest enemy of Slavs. Papa said, 'You do not hate him, you hate Kismet that made his soldiers kill Stepanie; you must learn to be impersonal.' But after two years I hated him worse than before, and made Mohammed swear with me to end him. Well, Jaffer, two days before Lister opened came letter from medical man in Vienna who knew. He wrote, 'Saadi, Archduke will live one year, maybe two, but not three.' My God, what was use to shoot him! It would only give Austria excuse to wipe Servia off map, and Germany would jump at chance to get to Stamboul while Franz Joseph was alive to help. Then came worst of all!"

"What do you mean?"

"My mother died. Why should it almost kill me? What is one mother in whole world of mothers? I got papa's letter on day before Lister opened. I entered, but that night all was too much. In your room I tried to end up Saadi with gas."

"Poor kid! I didn't know that. Who found you?"

"Dr. Trench. He was shorter with me than what you say piecrust. He did not give one damn. He was colder than Allah and harder than army of Turks. It did me lot of good, Jaffer. I could see inside him. He had worse despair than I had. I said, If this man can stick it out, so can Saadi. You must be good to him, Jaffer."

"I'm trying to be."

"I mean what you say *simpatico*. It is big internal wound in doctor. I do not know what."

"And thinking him wounded, you proceeded to lie to him."

"Suremike. I told him Arabian Nights about Bokhara. He did not believe one word. He just said, 'Let me look at wound in neck!' He looked, and knew I was lying, and said, 'Go on.' He is best of all men."

"Was it necessary to fill him up like that?"

"Suremike. Doctor is Vienna man. Suppose he went to dinner of Vienna men. Suppose Silvestri talked to him. Silvestri is consul in Chicago, and he is not anybody's fool. Suppose doctor said, 'I know Vienna man named Saadi Sereef.' That would be nice business!"

"I see. And you had to keep up the Bokhara bluff till the last minute, I suppose."

"Suremike. When cable came, I had to have money quick. I could not get up nerve to bleed doctor with direct operation. I went to Congress Hotel and hired room, and put on whiskers and eye-glasses same as when I handled teachers in Bosnian schools. I was Rosenvine, agent of Kushbeg wishing to find wandering kid. Becker came to see Rosenvine, and I filled him up to neck — only I made one little break when I tried to quote Jew proverb. I followed him to Western Union, and after he sent wire I went in and read torn up

scraps he left. It was funny, Jaffer. All dear boys in Caravansery offered Saadi money, and Becker told doctor, and doctor handed me thousand dollars in gold. But something made me awful sick when Deland talked to me so kind. I had to lie about mamma. I had to kill her once more, for Bosnia."

"You certainly missed your calling, Saadi. Anybody who can play the Jew well enough to fool Becker, and play the Bokharan well enough to fool Ameen — well, he has most actors beaten to what Deland would describe as a frazzle."

Saadi sighed. "We are all actors. We go to play to get points about daily acting, which is serious business. Issa was great actor."

"What!"

"I say, Issa was great actor. Did you ever read third sura of what you say Fourth Gospel?"

"Not on your life, Saadi. It is bad enough for a binamaz * to go to the mosque and act like the faithful, as I do sometimes when it will help business."

"Well, my Jaffer, sometime you read third of John, and see Issa pretend damn war-machine of universe had son called prince of peace. It is good business. He pretended so hard he went glorious crazy and believed it. Elsie made me read, because friend of hers dared her to. It seemed to inject good big dose digitalis in poor old Saadi's circulation. If not that last dose for nerves, I think Saadi would have wired Mohammed Beg to please go to hell.— Well, Jaffer, go on tell how you tracked me."

"Why, the doctor sent me a telegram containing the mystic letters B.S.V.D. It took me some time to get the ingredients of that formula."

"Oh, ho! I was careless child to leave it in your room. I thought it was in my flat, in grate fire. It was signal with Mohammed. We had long code. It

* One who does not say his prayers.

was wonderful you could guess 'Bosna Serai, Vidov Dan!' But how you knew boys in Belgrad?"

"Yukitch told me that you used to haunt the Green Wreath, and so I went there to find you."

"It is wonderful. It is very wonderful. And all this you did for me. No, you did not do one damn thing for me. You did for Dr. Trench."

"Yes," said Jaffer, "and partly because I don't like to be beaten."

"It was for Dr. Trench," repeated Saadi. "It was for living breath of science in damned unscientific world. Jaffer, it is terrible thing that is going to happen in two three months."

"You scared Ilitch, my friend, but you can't scare me."

"Of course I can't scare you. When Franz Ferdinand walks straight into trap with eyes open, how can I scare wide-awake Dr. Jaffer aus Peshawar? But look!"

Saadi rose and thrust his finger into the western darkness. "It is about nine miles down to Ilidze as raven flies. There is old arsenal in ground, where neolithic men made stone weapons. In six months all Europe will be back to neolithic stage. Bogomi, Bogomi! Tell Dr. Trench never to let Elsie come to Starigrad to live. Let my little Saadi grow up in Chicago, and Dr. Trench keep eye on him. My father will send money always. My father will settle money on Elsie. But it is end of Starigrad."

"Don't get gloomy, Saadi. Where are you going to be all this time?"

"In grave, Jaffer. But we will give both sides good run for money. I wonder if they have taken Haidar yet."

Jaffer emptied his bundle, drew Saadi close to him beside the little fire, and spread his European clothes and the Bokhara suit over them. "Rest now, my

friend. Dream that you are at Starigrad safe in the kula, or in Halsted Street safe in our room."

Jaffer fell asleep at once, but he slept so quietly that Saadi thought him still awake. "Jaffer," said Saadi softly.

Jaffer heard, far away, and slowly came back.

"Jaffer, when Kaiser of Germany goes to sleep you think he feels like child?"

"Khuda medanad," growled Jaffer.

"Well, Jaffer, I do not see how in such big lonesome world any man can go to sleep — I do not care how big is jaw or cerebrum — unless he plays he is child again."

"All right, Saadi. Try it on."

XLI

JAFFER was awakened by his own shivering. He reached over and found that Saadi was gone. He raised himself on his elbow and looked around in the dim dawn, but there was no trace of his companion. Had the gendarmes come and carried him off? If so, it was kismet. Jaffer turned over and went to sleep again, minding the hard earth no more than he minded the floor on which he usually slept at home.

When he was again awakened, it was by a subdued crackling. Saadi sat there by the renewed fire, smoking a cigarette and writing a letter. An earthen jug of milk foamed beside him, and a small bag of food lay open — bread, cheese, and dried figs. Saadi had walked a mile and a half to the little hamlet of Luka, to give his friend a proper morning welcome.

Jaffer rubbed the sleep out of his eyes. "Take a drink, thou admirable chamois-beast, and pass the jug."

"After you, dear Alphonse-Jaffer," mumbled Saadi, not removing his cigarette. And Jaffer drank. Never had milk of kine tasted sweeter to human kind.

Saadi finished what he had been writing on the blank sheet of Elsie's letter. "Open belt again, Jaffer, and put this in. You can put with it three hundred dollars of Dr. Trench's money. I have it in belt round diaphragm."

"Not so, my friend, but far otherwise. You might need it, and your father has already sent the doctor a draft. Please pass the figs."

Jaffer munched and drank, munched and drank, disobeying the rule of the East, which separates the two

operations by a considerable space of time. Saadi ate stale rolls in silence, and by and by carefully collected the remaining food and put it into the little bag he had wheedled from the kmet's wife on the outskirts of Luka.

"Do we dry these things before we start?"—Jaffer held up the improvised bedclothes, dripping with dew.

"We do not. We wait till to-night, when we will dry tumbees and what you say breechaloons. In words of esteemed Deland, it is one wide river for to cross."

"Are there no bridges in Bosnia?"

"Not for us, Pilgrim. We shall cross beautiful Austrian road which goes along by beautiful Zeleznitza, but less we walk in road less we will be in it. Come on, Pilgrim. You are dirty enough, to-day."

Jaffer was much the taller man, but it taxed his long light limbs to keep up. They did not enter the hamlet of Luka, but left the bridlepath and moved west, at the imminent risk of breaking their necks. Saadi sprang from rock to rock like a flying theory which occasionally touches a fact.

Before noon they had forded two streams in two canyons, and lay in hiding on the mountain above the Austrian road. They watched till they saw the motor-diligence which runs from Serajevo to Tirnovo. The news of the assassination was on its way south, and by night it would reach the lonely fort at Kallinovitch.

When the coast seemed clear they scrambled down, crossed the road, and stepped into the river. Saadi moved slowly through the rushing current, holding his watch on high, gripping the stones with his toes, and illustrating every law of balance, strain, and strength of materials. Jaffer slipped, gasped with the cold shock, and had to swim for it. He emerged a hundred yards farther down the stream at the foot of the opposite cliff. A minute's rest, and they scaled the cliff tooth and nail.

They were now in the foothills of the Treskavitcha

Alps, and Saadi knew little more about this savage region than did his dripping companion. The sky had clouded over and a mist was settling down, but there could be no waiting. They pressed on, up and through ragged gulleys and beech trees deformed as envy. There was no question of roads. To get south was the only aim, and not to get lost in the mist. But by and by they blundered into a bridle path.

By five o'clock it was unsafe to proceed farther. They were at an elevation which made breathing too rapid for tired bodies, and they were apparently descending. They spent an hour hunting for the right camping place, and found it. Sheltered in the pines, a wide rent in the rock ended against a blank wall of precipice. They shivered for another hour, collecting pine cones and boughs. Then they built a roaring fire against the cliff, and stripped to the skin. Every rag was hung where it would dry. Saadi rolled in the pine needles like a white hound. Jaffer stood close to the fire, swartly elegant against the blaze.

When everything was incontestably dry, they dressed, and ate all the cheese and most of the remaining bread, slowly. Jaffer fell asleep in the process.

A few miles to the south of them, far down below, a sentinel at the Fort of Kallinovitch went on watch. For three years he had been marooned in that spot, his chief consolation being the patch of kraut which he had patiently forced to grow. As he now took up his round he was plaintively singing his favourite song—"Ade, mein Land Tirol." He turned his eyes to where the Tirol lay inaccessible, and behold, on the nearer barrier he beheld a misty glow. He watched it. It did not widen, but towered. Never before had he seen anything like that on the mountain. It was a signal fire, and could mean but one thing—the news of the assassination had spread, and all Bosnia was rising. He called aloud to his lieutenant, and the whole garrison

was presently with him. It was clear to the commandant that with the dawn he must despatch as many scouts as could be spared, and also summon reinforcements.

All of which was far from Jaffer's mind as he slept off his first irresistible drowsiness, there between the sheltering walls that caught the heat and warmed him to the marrow. He was roused by the sound of music. Saadi had arranged for himself a comfortable hollow, and was softly singing an English song:

"The world is so wide, dearie,
True friends are so rare, dearie,
Who knows what danger may wait for you there!
No matter how well we have guarded the fold,
The wolves will come in somewhere.
But rest you and slumber, and dream if you will,
You're safe this night, I know —"

The singing was not very good, and the singer struggled in vain with the sound of w. But the scene smote Jaffer to the heart. Not till the young husband arose to replenish the fire did the Peshawari turn slowly on his side and exclaim, "Excuse me, Saadi Beg. I believe I've been asleep."

"Well, Jaffer, you presented all symptoms. Which reminds me that we are taking rest from study of medicine. Last thing I was up against was Heubner on feeding of infants."

"Trench has disproved all that calorimetric nonsense," said Jaffer, arising. "Didn't you see his article?"

"Not guilty. I was too busy writing letters. Especially about Irish and English. You did not know Saadi had correspondent in Belfast."

"How should I?"

"Well, I have. It is boy from Agram which is now in Belfast. He gets on what you say scrumptious with Irish. I guess I am little bit Irish myself. Now if you were Englishman, and I were Irishman that hated

you, and Austrian gendarmes should see us scrapping up here, what would gendarmes say? They would say, Jaffer is very busy with howling handful called Saadi, and will not fight if we jump on kmets. But when we saw kmets jumped on, would we sit still? I don't think."

Jaffer assented, but he did not see what bearing the parable had on the study of medicine, and said so.

For answer Saadi changed the subject. "Please ask Dr. Trench to break rule and take care of my Elsie in October."

"Ask him yourself, Saadi."

"I will whenever I see him. But I shall never see him."

"What reason have you for saying that? I think we're progressing finely."

"No reason. It is some old Bogumil talking inside me. It keeps saying, 'Saadi, look up at your star. It is going out pretty quick now.'"

"Forget it, Saadi."

"Call me old man, like Deland!" Saadi's eyes had a strange, hungry, uncanny look, as he arose and stood.

"Forget it, old man. You and I are rationalists. We don't believe in signs. We say 'Allah' because it is a language."

Saadi backed against the unyielding rock and stared, as if then and there trying to wrest from the darkness the dread secret of all darkness.

"Good God, Saadi! Have I struggled up out of Hindu superstitions to have you look at me like that, on the cliff of a mountain, with the wind rising in the pine trees!"

Saadi laughed, and the spell was broken. "I wish I knew how Elsie went to Dr. Trench. She says nothing in letter except she is glad I went, and glad baby is coming."

"I'm sure I don't know. I have his cable some-

where, but it only directs me to find you and tell you the news. He wrote a letter with ten lines in it. Wu had given him Yukitch's address, but not his name."

"Wu! Ah, yes! Good old yellow dog with memory like flypaper. But, Jaffer, it was some words on Elsie's letter in French. Elsie does not know French."

"Well, Saadi, maybe she learned it suddenly, as I learned Serbian. And perhaps you left the telegram in Elsie's room, and perhaps she found it. But it is too bad she thinks of you as a Bokharan."

Saadi looked at Jaffer appealingly. "I did not dare tell Elsie. She does not care if I am Bokharan or Turk or Wild Indian. She knows I will not come back maybe. She knows I am trying to stop some sort of Shaitan business. She told me she would be ashamed of me if I did not go. Oh, my Jaffer, think how little is one man — one poor fool kid like me."

"There, there, old man! You were right to take no risks. I've noticed that most fellows are good critics, because they judge by their ideals, but very few of us would start out single-handed to do what you did."

Saadi was still leaning against the rock, and the firelight gave his features a certain grimness. "When I am dead, it is end of Saadi except for thoughts of him in heads of Elsie and papa and Jaffer. I wish thoughts to be good thoughts. I did not run away like Yukitch, or say it was no use to be anything but animal. I wanted to be scientific like Dr. Trench — to set few bones awful careful which are out of joint. Yesterday operation failed. But we came awful close, Jaffer, to stave off war for many years."

"Thank you for including me. I was only an atom in the game."

"You were bigger atom than Saadi. I was only hydrogen, but you were atom of gold. It was all accident, Jaffer, but think how strange that atoms have idea of good. You remember sura nine and twenty?"

"Yes. That's a short one. 'Whosoever has wrought an atom's worth of good shall behold it in that Day.' But I thought that you and I had abandoned any fear of paradise."

"We have. We have chucked whole damn dream, including 'houris like pearls hidden in shells.' But I behold atom of good — now, here, in night, close up by snowpeak on top of mountain. I behold what we did yesterday as little piece of all right."

"It was little, sure enough."

"I don't care, Jaffer. World is probably damn failure. World is probably what Bogumils said — one big mistake. But in it are little specks of pure gold and little bits of red *l'al*. What is *l'al* in English?"

"Rubies."

"Suremike. If I had ruby I would send to Elsie, and say, 'Teach our boy not to be afraid to spill drop of blood to make little bit more good in world!' Oh, damn, Jaffer. I am preaching to you off minaret."

"Let 'er rip, Saadi." Jaffer rubbed his stomach reflectively, unbuckled his money-belt, and extracted a bunch of tissue paper. "Here is a present I brought you. Fellow in Afghanistan gave it to me."

Saadi unfolded the tissue paper by the fire, and the ruby blazed out. He stood gazing at it as it lay in the palm of his hand. "You old Devil. You abuse me for being superstitious, but when I am in trouble you walk in like geni. When I say *l'al*, you rub tummy like Aladdin's lamp and hand me *l'al*."

"Won't you take it?"

"What would I do with it? Here, Jaffer, hold hosses one minute."

Saadi returned the ruby, and pulled off his own money-belt. "Here are two of Dr. Trench's gold eagles. You must have ruby set in ring for Elsie, and say it is from Saadi and Saadi's new pobratim. You cannot afford to give, — I know. What I care! Jaffer

must suffer because he has good heart. All good hearts must bleed."

And so Jaffer put the ruby back into his belt, wrapped up with two gold eagles. And by this time the fire was burning low, and both men crept into the hollow that Saadi had made. But this time Jaffer slept less soundly than his companion. There was a burden on his mind — a message still to be delivered. He was saving it till the last possible minute, and giving his friend a chance to store up needed energy. Time and again he opened his eyes to look upon the glowing bed of coals, and listen to the roaring of the wind in the pines. Some such sound Trench had heard as he stood beside the grave of his oldest friend, three years before.

But in the earliest morning the wind had gone down, and the mists were light, and the travellers looked out upon the southern landscape as they gnawed their last crusts.

"To-day we must be careful, Jaffer. Down there to left is Fort Kallinovitch. We must go to west, and keep off roads. I have finished breakfast. Give me cigarette."

The minute had come. Jaffer extracted from his cummerbund the long saved packet of Stepanies. It had been soaked by the river, but he opened it gingerly and handed it over. Saadi took out a cigarette carefully, not noticing the brand, and began to smoke.

"Saadi, did you know the Belgrad boys' password?"

"No. Did you?"

"Yes, by accident. It was a box of Stepanie cigarettes."

Saadi tossed the cigarette away.

"Yukitch —" began Jaffer.

"Well — Yukitch?"

"Told me about your little sister. And then I couldn't smoke the things."

"God bless you." Saadi's face was twitching.

"But that is not all, old man. Brace up and take the last message I have for you. I stopped at Kadri Beg's. He sent this curious word to you: *The son of the Haiduk is grown, and Haidar has forgotten how to shoot.*"

Saadi did not start, but sat gazing intently downward into the plain. "He did that for my mother's sake."

"I inferred as much. Does the message trouble you?"

"I should worry. Haidar killed man that he thought killed Stepanie. It was in days of Streifkorps — volunteers to guard against uprising after Annexation. Many Turks joined Korps with Austrians. Of four guilty brutes one was Turk. Tell Ameen it was Turk, not Jew. Haidar thought he knew that Haiduk, and went and shot him down in presence of little son. No man could prove Turk was guilty. Boy was twelve then. Boy is eighteen now. But I should worry. Son of Haiduk does not know Saadi is coming to Stari-grad."

"I don't feel certain on that last point, Saadi. The guslar celebrated my arrival, and I guess he had a little too much raki to drink. He stood up and told the whole village that you would appear soon after Vidov Dan."

"Well, I should worry. Village does not go marching down Sutjeska canyon, yelling that Saadi is coming home."

"I thought that you had a sort of presentiment."

"It was nothing. It was night and nerves. Anyhow, I am only afraid of Vienna, Budapest, and Belgrad. I am not afraid of Turkish kids. If he wants to kill somebody, he will kill Haidar. But he cannot get gun to do it with, and he sure can't get within knife-reach of old Haidar."

"You relieve me. You certainly do relieve me. I'm ready to start."

"What is it down there? Look, Jaffer, where fog has busted. It is two gendarmes."

"I fancy that you're right. They're patrolling the bridle path. It's up to you, old mau."

For answer Saadi arose and led the way still higher on the mountain, through the pines that clung to the steep sides. And that detour was the model of travel for the rest of the day. They saw other gendarmes and they made other chamois excursions. Before ten o'clock they descended into a little village which shall be nameless, and bought food, and got out again just in time to see a considerable squad of soldiers march in. They crawled down a cliff into the gorge of the Narenta, and this time stripped and carried their clothes on their heads as they waded across.

Having at last reached a high region barren as logic and very familiar to Saadi, they settled down into a jog trot, and dodged boulders hour after hour. The Alps grew dim behind them, and Saadi capered like a Bosnian pony as they approached Starigrad, going down hill mile after mile.

Seven o'clock, and red evening in the west, and the old kula appeared, with deep dark shadows at the foot of the cliff. A belated flock of doves, rising from the polje, whirled above them. Instead of flying upward to their home, they seemed to be delaying and gazing downward.

As the two footsore men stepped upon the Saadi bridge, the heir of Starigrad gave a long, chirruping whistle. Instantly the air was full of wings. The older doves had recognised him, and circled down, down, till one settled on his shoulder. There stood Saadi in the middle of the bridge, laughing joyously, and putting morsels of dry bread on his shoulders to be caught up by the whirling cloud of iridescence. Jaffer leaned against the parapet and watched the pretty sight.

Then he glanced ahead, and he saw a form in the

shadowy defile. It was not Haidar. It held something in its hand. Jaffer's heart gave a jump. He tore open his kurta, grasped his knife by the hilt, wrenched it loose, and dashed forward. The evening light made him a perfect mark, and he had not gone ten feet when his right arm seemed to drop dead and the Afghan knife clattered on the stones. Checked by the mere impact of the shot, he stood grasping the burning arm, long enough for the defile to send out one, two, three, four red flashes past him. Then Jaffer plunged ahead, left arm extended. But the fellow darted past him on the right, across the bridge.

Jaffer wheeled. One of the doves lay dead. The rest had fluttered higher, but they had not gone. Saadi stood clinging to the parapet, as a wounded squirrel clings to a tree. Even as Jaffer approached, a dove settled on Saadi's shoulder as if to ask who made all that unwonted noise.

Jaffer's left arm went round the silent form.—“Where is it, old man? For God's sake, where is it?”

Saadi lifted his hand to his neck, smiling. He was unable to speak, but he was fighting, fighting, there among the shattered tissues, to rule his little transient kingdom of earth.

Jaffer ran his fingers over the neck and pressed a handkerchief to the wound, but he could not raise his right arm or apply a bandage. He could only stand with his left arm around his friend, and pray. Poor old rationalist—the blood of centuries was too strong for him.

Three or four minutes passed before it occurred to him that he could yell. But now there was a sudden noise—the sound of hoof-beats on the karst. They came swiftly nearer, and down the defile swept Haidar on horseback—revolver held high. He did not draw rein, but went across the bridge like the thrown hammer of an ancient god.

Saadi straightened himself. Saadi opened his lips and spat a mouthful of blood. "No, Haidar, no!" he shouted clear and strong.

Then the blood filled his mouth in one swift surge, and earth slowly drew his stained lips to her breast.

Haidar heard and drew rein. It cost him dear, for in half an hour it would have been all over with the Turk's son, and there are chasms in the karst which never give up that which is flung into them. It cost him dear, but reason told him that his young lord needed help.

Back he came and flung himself off his horse. Jaffer was sitting on the ground, wiping the paling lips, and the doves had departed.

"Hakim! Hakim! You will save him! You are the mighty Marko!"

"I cannot raise the dead," said Jaffer, and was silent.

Haidar sank beside his master, looked long upon the face, lifted a hand and kissed it. Then he bowed his forehead to the earth, and again and again struck the insensate stone with his brow. He said no word, but his groans were terrible to hear.

Presently it was no longer necessary to wipe the lips. The eyes were closed. The form lay in its eternal peace. Haidar lifted it and placed it on the horse.

"Wait, Haidar. Is there still some other man in Starigrad, swift and trusty, who needs no moon to guide him?"

"Yes, Hakim."

"Can he leave within the hour for Cetinje, for Saadi's sake?"

"Anything can be done for Saadi's sake."

With the uncertain fingers of his left hand, Jaffer unloosed his money-belt, drew out a handful of gold, and then a short pencil and a bit of paper. Placing the paper on the parapet of the bridge he laboriously printed six words, addressed to Trench.

"This cable message will reach our Saadi's wife. Here is gold of Austria. Tell your messenger to buy a second Turkish horse when he has killed the first. Otherwise on the morrow the Lady Ilsa will think her husband a murderer."

With his free hand Haidar took the gold and the paper. Then the little cortège mounted the hill.

But it was not Haidar who dared to meet Stepan Beg. It was Jaffer who went forward by himself, and opened the door, and walked steadily upstairs, dripping blood. Stepan Beg, whose scarlet turban was bent forward in the moonlight of the old brass lamp, sprang to his feet.

"Once you called me a hero, Prince Stepan. It was false, for heroes die in the path of God. Saadi is a hero."

Stepan Beg trembled, clutched the folds of his tunic where it leaves the throat, and stood erect.

"Repute them not dead who are slain in God's path, for God is He who turneth, Merciful."

Then he stepped forward and swiftly removed Jaffer's kurta. He took the scarlet turban from his own head and wrapped it skilfully around the arm, drawing it very tight and knotting it. Jaffer suddenly swayed. Stepan Beg caught him, urged him toward the divan, and then — for it was necessary — lifted him bodily and laid him there.

XLII

"No, doctor, not with that hand!"

It was Dr. Becker who spoke, developing with his new degree a new authority. He led his chief back into the house, made him sit down, and sent Chat for whisky. For Trench was white and faint, and had started out with his arm still in the sling.

The case was simple enough. On June 22, Trench had infected the tip of his best finger. The accident was not due to any excited assistant. He did the thing himself, in the course of showing a fresh specimen to a visiting surgeon. The whole right arm had swollen almost instantly, and had to be lanced four times. Also he had spent that number of days in bed. In short, the children of Halsted had come within an ace of losing the hand that had helped them so often. They had not lost it, but that finger-tip would have to be re-educated.

Therefore on Sunday morning, June 28, 1914, Trench was obliged to telephone Edith that those about him were tyrants, and that he should be unable to hear her prove life something more than photo-chemistry. She expressed her sympathy, and said that the subject would keep.

Soon after eleven that morning, as he lay on the couch in the library, Trench received Jaffer's first cable. He read it with joy, and called Chatterjee.

"Say, old man,"—he had caught the human trick of * that from Saadi,—“didn't I hear you mention your acquaintance with Miss Bridgman?”

"You did, doctor. I feel like Saadi, who was always declaring himself a barbarian, or some such thing."

"Then change your feelings, my son, and change your Calcutta clothes to American, and kindly go at once to call on the lady. I want you to tell her all about your poet who looks like Tennyson — I forget his name. And incidentally don't fail to give her this cable. Read it yourself, if you want to. You didn't know that Jaffer was asked to call on Saadi."

Chat wanted to say "Oh, didn't I?" but he intended to make no more breaks. He read the message while he was changing his clothes, and couldn't for the life of him understand who, besides himself, had been sending messages to Saadi via Jaffer.

After Edith Bridgman received the message, there wasn't much conversation about Mr. Tagore. She simply introduced the courteous youth to her sister, got them to talking, excused herself, and scurried out of the house.

"Elsie, my dear girl, what do you think of that?"

Elsie studied it, and got out an atlas and Saadi's scrapbooks, and looked up Serajevo. Neither of them had heard of the place before. There were probably numerous references to it in the clippings printed in Cyrillic, but they couldn't even find the word there, the letters were so strange. Finally Edith sent home for a volume of the encyclopædia, and when it came they studied Bosnia for two hours.

"It's a great mystery, Edith. Would you — could you — stay with me until to-morrow?"

Edith stayed. That evening Elsie made her beguile the hours with some account of the studies that had occupied her all the year. With growing wonder she soon made her narrow biology to the subject of embryology. And awe filled her heart as she listened. Little had she dreamed what infinite and impersonal lines of force met within her own body, finding their sole significance in the miracle of personal love.

Next morning Edith was the first one up, and she

made Elsie stay in bed. A little lovering would not hurt Elsie, just now. While the teakettle was boiling, Edith brought in the morning paper, and glanced it through in the kitchen.

Of course the news of the assassination caught her eye, and made her heart stand still. All her old fears came back, or rather a wholly new set of worse ones. Saadi — so his wife had said — was going to attempt something dangerous, and Saadi was a revolutionist. His name was not given in the paper, but these first reports were not to be trusted.

Her first thought was to burn the paper before Elsie saw it. But Elsie would be sure to ask for it, being very much alive to daily news, and much grieved that the socialist daily had to suspend, and disgusted that big business kept certain news out of the other papers. And no sooner had Elsie drunk her coffee and eaten her toast than she did ask for the paper. Edith went and got it, and pointed at once to the Serajevo story.

Elsie ran it through, and her dark eyes kindled. "Poor boy, poor boy!" she exclaimed.

"What are you saying? Do you think he knew of this? Did he tell you anything?"

"Never a word, Edith. But it is all as clear as the day. He tried to stop it, and he didn't succeed. He told me that he was going to stop some sort of Satan business.— Well, all we can do is to wait."

And there they sat and waited, for Edith wouldn't let her get up. They talked of many things until nearly noon, when Elsie insisted on rising and getting luncheon herself.

After that was eaten, Elsie was persuaded to go for a drive with Helena. Edith telephoned Dr. Trench, asking him to send any further message to the flat, where she would remain to receive it.

But no cable came that afternoon from Jaffer. Only there came Stepan Beg's two drafts on Serajevo, one

for Trench and one for Elsie, together with a note in German, "repeating the grateful salaams he had so often sent by Saadi." Trench understood now why those salaams had never reached him. He sent Chat over to show the note to Miss Bridgman, and to leave for Mrs. Sereef the wedding gift sent by her father-in-law. This time Chat went with an understanding heart, having had all explained to him.

It was late in the afternoon of the next day when Trench got Jaffer's second wire — laboriously printed on the parapet of the Saadi bridge, and cautiously worded in case it should fall into the hands of the Austrian patrol:

Cetinje, June 30, 1914.

Dr. Trench, Halsted Street, Chicago.

Dead. He waged war against war.

R. R. J.

Trench sank into a chair, stricken, and closed his eyes. But he kept saying to himself, "Thank God, thank God." He did not intend it as prayer or praise, but it was perilously near the line.

Half an hour later he ascertained that Edith was still with Elsie. He waited till next morning, however, in order to give Elsie a night's rest. Then he went to the flat, found Edith alone in the front room, and silently showed her the message.

Edith as silently read it. She asked him to remain, in case the shock made medical attendance necessary. Then she went into Elsie's bedroom.

"My dear, dearest girl — are you brave this morning?"

Elsie turned her great dark eyes toward her friend, and again they seemed to kindle.

"Give it to me!"

Edith obeyed, kneeling beside her as she read. The yellow paper slowly crumpled in Elsie's clenched hand, and her very lips grew white, but her eyes blazed.

"I'm going to get up! There's a man within me, and he shall never say that I lay crying when his father had just died for the workers."

Edith saw that it would be unwise to protest. She helped her dress, and they both went into the living room. Elsie spoke.

"Dr. Trench, you have been a good friend to my husband. If it had not been for you he would have done some reckless and destructive thing. But now he has done a reckless thing that is constructive, and he and I are glad to pay the price."

"I am proud to have known him, Mrs. Sereef, and proud to know you. I owe him more than I can well explain or understand. But you will draw on me for anything — money, counsel, or blood — so long as we both live."

Elsie took his hand silently. Then she turned and went into the kitchen. It is true that when she was there alone she leaned against the wall, gasping "Saadi, Saadi," but the evidence of her grief was not heard in the other room.

Trench rose, and Edith walked beside him, into the hall. As they stopped, she lifted her eyes to Trench — and Trench knew. She held out her left hand to meet the one uninjured, but instead of taking it he put his left arm about her, as Jaffer had put an arm about Saadi. From each person sprang that which might still have been held in leash, for each soul — poor discarded name for something — was mightier than the passion. She leaned her head against his breast, and he kissed her forehead.

"You see what life is like."

"I am not afraid. Is it worth while without me?"

"Yes! Without heaven and even without you!"

"Then take me!"

"My beautiful, we both are scarred, but you had a father, let your son say so."

"My great impersonal man, scars are not transmitted."

"Thank God for that! And Jaffer has sent a ruby that shall cover yours."

"A ruby! There should be one for Elsie, too. I saw the web of life like an opal, full of scars. But I saw it change to a ruby, hiding them all."

THE END

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